

IDENTITY AND CREATIVITY: *IMAGO DEI*,  
*DYNAMIS THEO*, AND  
*BASILEIA TOU THEO*

KEVIN A. McKINNEY  
BACHELOR, SETON HALL UNIVERSITY, 1976  
M.Div., ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, 2005

Faculty Mentors  
Jon Ruthven, Ph.D.  
Luther Oconner, Ph.D.

A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Dayton, Ohio

MAY, 2015

**United Theological Seminary  
Dayton, Ohio**

**Faculty Approval Page  
Doctor of Ministry Final Project**

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KEVIN A. McKINNEY

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Faculty Mentors

Jon Ruthven, Ph.D.

Luther Oconner, Ph.D.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentors:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **IDENTITY AND CREATIVITY: *IMAGO DEI*, *DYNAMIS THEO*, AND *BASILEIA TOU THEO***

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The purpose of this research project is to determine how people identify themselves. Are Christian and non-Christian sectors virtually the same? The church should offer the type of discipleship necessary to provide the Image of God, to demonstrate the Kingdom of God and the Power of God. With this creative answers and creative power should be within every Christian's grasp. Therefore if you see a Christian, you should have seen the Father. Identity is in relation to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the one true God for the gifts of the spirit, the fullness of life, and for showing me the path to discipleship and intimacy with God.

I would like to thank my wife Jean for thirty five years of an incredible marriage. Also to thank my daughter Jessica, and son Andrew for obliging me this long journey and their patience with their at times absentee father.

I want to thank Randy Clark and Global Awakening, for providing me with a spiritual home.

I offer my gratitude to my faculty mentors Jon Ruthven and Luther Oconner without whose help, patience and tolerance, this project would not have been possible. My many thanks to Dr. Hugo Magallenes, Dr. Ronald Pasquariello, and Dr. David Tanner for their input and guidance.

Lastly, I am indebted to those of Sound Truth Ministry pastored by Tim and Lynette Gingrich for their support. They know that they are the children of God, co-heirs with Christ, and more than conquerors. They are dedicated to the commission to preach the presence of the kingdom, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons.

To Jean V. McKinney

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## ABBREVIATIONS

H.A.R.T	His Art Retreats and Training
INTP	<u>I</u> ntroverted <u>I</u> ntuitive <u>T</u> hinking <u>P</u> erceiving
NAU	<i>New American Standard Bible</i>
NRS	<i>New Revised Standard Version Bible</i>
STM	Sound Truth Ministries
UMC	United Methodist Church
WOP	Without Official Papers - derogatory reference to Italians
WWJD	What would Jesus do

## INTRODUCTION

In the beginning (or rather as our immediate world was beginning to be put together) there we were with all the possibilities before us as the children of promise – blank canvasses and untouched marble. Our existence was un-bridled, un-girded, and unconformed to the societal imprints. Our world was self-centric and served our needs and desires (that is if we were part of a wealthy society. If not our world was a little smaller.) The limits of our imagination have not been plumbed. Therein lays the danger. This is the place where cultures, societies, and religions try to mold us into their image and likeness to perpetuate their limiting concepts, morals, philosophy, and religious repressions all leading to false concepts of identity.

The problem in the church is that we are constantly focused upon the broken image of Adam rather than the original image of God in whom we are created. As the broken image it is difficult to even begin to imagine that we could carry out the commands of Jesus (Matthew 10:7-8; 28: 19-20, Luke 16:15), or the proclamations of Luke 4:18 – 19/Isaiah 61:1-2. From this broken image we cannot understand that creation, thus creativity, is the full concept of the power (*dynamis*) of God bestowed upon us to create and transform all of creation. Through the rejection of the early Hebraic understanding of Genesis in favor of the intellectualized concentration on the fall of man, we lose the focus of a completed and whole creation.



Through a close reading of the text of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3, we begin to fully understand the redemptive image of God as claimed and proclaimed through Jesus as the originally intended image of God.

Chapter one discusses the author's spiritual journey, the rural/suburban community context of Freeburg Pennsylvania, the identity of Sound Truth Ministries (STM), and its community connections.

The second chapter is foundational in establishing the biblical, historical, and theology for this ministry project. The researcher delves into the biblical support for an identity that naturally flows into miracles, signs, and wonders as inherited activities rightfully belonging to all those who follow Jesus.

Chapter three presents a review of materials that have influenced the construction of this ministry project. This chapter elaborates upon how the theoretical foundation merges into the practical ministry design for the ministry training event.

Chapter four describes the action research modality chosen for the study. It outlines the reasons for the qualitative methodology chosen, the data collection and analysis procedures. It is an exploratory framework analysis required to generate and interpret the meaning of the data accumulated for the study.

Chapter five is the chronicle of field experience examining what occurred during the implementation of the study. Inclusive are the specifics of the training event, the data collection methodology and analysis, the search for emergent codes, the findings, and outcomes. Chapter five provides the structural elements that rest upon the frame work of chapter four.

Chapter six contains the conclusory statements of the researcher providing reflective statements for the study, summation of the training and remarks. This inclusive of the results of the study, insights into ways the project could be improved, and suggestions for further research.

While this project was limited in scope and place to a few members of STM and limited survey materials, it is the researcher opinion that this will provide for the beginnings of foundational studies for other believers of Jesus who seriously endeavor to produce true discipleship now and in the future.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

#### About the Author

There isn't any one experience to be sighted as the most transformative experience or more important than the next. It is a continuum of experiences that produce a journey. The journey is the transformative experience as one continuous thread.

#### Parental Influence

The journey started with a mother whose view of the church was as a den of hypocrites claiming to be holier than thou, holding every one accountable except themselves. The relatives of the writer's adopted sister wanted her to be baptized in the Catholic Church. Being born out of wedlock automatically precluded the child from being capable of being baptized and a member of the church. The writer's mother would never attend the Catholic Church except for the rare special occasion because of this.

The writer's mother was a second-generation Italian American Roman Catholic. Product of the depression, daughter of an immigrant coal miner/quarry man and second generation Italian American stay at home mother with four brothers and four sisters. It was a traditional male dominated Italian household where girls did not need to be educated beyond the eighth grade as they were to get married, have children, and take care of husband and home.

She experienced the pain of ethnic and religious prejudice growing up in a predominantly white Anglo-Saxon Protestant town that had little use for the Catholic WOPs. She grew up in a racially and ethnically mixed neighborhood on the wrong side of the tracks across from the clay pipe factory where her brothers would start their working careers. They moved to the New York City garment district seeking work during the depression. She insisted that her children know that all were created equal.

The father of the writer was a gentle and generous soul raised in a mixed household of Scot Presbyterian father and Irish Catholic mother. His father, the writer's grandfather, was disowned for marrying an Irish Catholic. On the day of his wedding, the family draped the front door in black as was the customary symbol of bereavement. That date was recorded in the family bible as the day of his death. None of his brothers or sisters was allowed to speak of him or to him from that point. The family moved from Philadelphia to New York City because of it all. The writer's father had four siblings, two brothers and two sisters.

The writer's father was a devout Catholic who could quote chapter and verse of the Bible as was taught to him by his father. The writer's grandfather died of pneumonia as the writer's father just beginning high school. The writer's father was forced to quit high school and help support the family as his older brother already married with a family of his own. He never had further formal education.

The writer's father carried the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm with him and a prayer from 50 AD that a pope had sent to the Emperor Charles in 1505. It was a prayer of protection which he carried into the Pacific theater of World War II.

This is the soil from which the writer has sprung.

### Family Influence

The writer lived in a multi-generational household with his maternal grandmother, maternal aunt, two sisters, mother and father in a heavily Irish/Italian Catholic household. The writer's two sisters were seven years older than the writer. The adopted sister was raised in the Methodist Church. The writer has an Aunt who was a Sister of St. Jean missionary in Guatemala and Africa. She was thrown out of Guatemala for being an activist in teaching and serving the indigenous population. The writer has a cousin who was a theologian with the Marist Brothers Order of the Roman Catholic Church.

The writer was born in New York City during the 1950's which was a prime time for the red scare, nuclear air raid drills, McCarthyism and the Civil Rights Movement. He was raised in a New Jersey suburb just a thirty minute train ride to relatives in New York City.

The writer met his wife Jean after graduating college. They lived for a ten years in New Jersey near their families. There they had two children, Jessica and Andrew. They moved to Florida where they lived for fourteen years. After graduating Seminary in Florida they moved back to the Northeast to Pennsylvania taking up residence in Carlisle and then Selinsgrove.

### Scholastic Influence

The writer was the product of the educational system of the Roman Catholic Church. He attended St. Mary's Catholic grammar school during the turbulent times of Vatican II, the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King, and the Vietnam War. Taught by the nuns of the Dominican Order; the same order as Pope John the XXIII. John the XXIII championed the Second Vatican Council causing massive reform

within the institution. Because of the Ecumenical Movement the writer was exposed to other religious practices in the new openness of the church. The nuns had the writer's class attend a Jewish Synagogue and receive instruction from the local Rabbi.

The writer went to Union Catholic Boys High School and Seton Hall University both active in the anti-Vietnam war movement. Much of the religious teaching was based upon the then developing Liberation and Thomism Theologies. College is where a lot of the experimentation took place – socially and religiously. The writer started as an English secondary education major but then changed to art history and musicology. The writer had several professors/teachers that had tremendous impact upon him.

Anthony Triano was an abstract expressionist and had input that changed the course of the writer's search. He believed that creativity in most people had been turned off by a society and school system that demands uniformity, conformity and sameness.

Dr. Frank Caminiti became a mentor and friend who widened the theological of views of the writer. Frank was a former Catholic monk turned philosopher who centered his teachings on those of Thomas Aquinas and Buddha. He was a seeker of the true working of God not interested in the organization but the heart. He had a monumental love of music and the arts. He chided you into looking beyond and asking a new set of questions. Frank also helped to start the New Jersey Society for Humanistic Studies.

Doc Burns was a jazz musician, academic and a deacon in a local Episcopal Church as the choir master and organist. His mastery of going for the reason behind the music pushed the writer to look behind the obvious not to settle but explore.

Professor Michael Valente was a radical Catholic theologian and a member of the new self-help movement involved in the works of Werner Erhard with his EST or Erhard

Seminar Training. Valente took on the teaching and started his own spin calling it LTL or Learning to Live. The writer became an active member and left the organized church at that time.

The writer attended Asbury Theological Seminary that was a part of the Renewal movement and was influenced by the Charismatic Movement as well. The whole Asbury experience had played a significant role in the confirmation of the writer's call. Much credit must go to Dr. Steve Harper, Dr. Robert Tuttle, Dr. Paul Chilcote, Dr. Ben Witherington III, and Dr. Hugo Magallanes.

The writer's continued affiliation was ended when an abrupt and highly controversial shift to ultra-conservatism and cessationist tendency took place in the ouster of the school's president. It marked an exodus of many esteemed professors and students.

### Literary Influences

*Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse is where most of the writer's ideas for the journey of life came from. As Siddhartha searches for his enlightenment/satori/epiphany, he follows the way of many sages and mimicking their ways. He does not truly gain enlightenment from any one of the mentors. He then becomes a ferry boat operator experiencing life and learning from it. He discovers that enlightenment was something that was happening to him all along. He had delayed a great deal of it because he was looking for it rather than experiencing it.

Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and the series of books by Joseph Campbell starting with *A Hero with a Thousand Faces* influenced the writer's decision to seek who and what he was. The writer had a whole set of standards and morals that had been handed to

him through well-meaning parents, pastors, friends and teachers but they had no meaning for they had no experience to them. It was all head knowledge and not heart knowledge.

In *The Lost Gospel Q – The Original Sayings of Jesus* by Thomas Moore and Marcus Borg is found the teachings of Christ without the addition of the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John but just the words of Christ. Here they came alive without the “prejudice” of someone’s narration. The head knowledge of youth is becoming the heart knowledge of today.

### Personality Influence

Through the course of events in exploration of his spirituality and purpose of ministry the writer has undergone a series of personal evaluation methodologies. Through the Myers/Briggs construct the writer has discovered that his profile is under the archetype of the INTP<sup>1</sup>. The profile requires precision of thought and language which tends to see distinctions and inconsistencies. They detect contradictory statements in their search for whatever is relevant and pertinent for issues at hand. They are unimpressed by office titles and positions. Logical and coherent statements are what carry weight as they abhor redundancy and incoherence. They desire to understand the universe and natural law with curiosity concerning those keys are the driving force.

INTP’s prize intelligence in themselves and in others and can become obsessed with analysis. They are easily considered intellectual snobs because they are impatient with others. This can cause hostility and defensive behavior in others who might call the INTP arrogant.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to the Myers/Briggs scale representing the personality type of Introverted Intuitive Thing Perceiving whose mode is focused internally with rationality and logic.



The INTP sees the world as existing primarily to be understood and reality an arena for proving ideas. It is essential that what is stated about the universe is correct, coherent and without redundancy. It doesn't matter whether others understand or accept the INTP's truth. <sup>2</sup>

This gives a basis for an understanding of the writer's personality. A spiritual gift assessment by Cedar Creek Church of Toledo, Ohio used to complete an overall evaluation. Craftsmanship, Creative Communication, Gift of Faith, and Teaching were all ranked equally high for the writer. The *Career Direct: Guidance System Report* from Crown Financial Ministries, Inc. combines the concepts of spiritual gifts and everyday talents to further his understanding of self. <sup>3</sup>

### The Call to Ministry

The writer had a deep need to seek out the spiritual side of his nature and began to follow the path of spiritual discovery. Unsatisfied with organized religion as he had experienced it, he began to seek God beyond the walls of organized churches.

The writer married someone who had shared a similar religious upbringing the product of a mixed denominational home. The mother was Roman Catholic and the father was of Presbyterian influence. The wife was raised Roman Catholic. The writer and his wife and had children attendance at church was nominal at best.

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<sup>2</sup> David Keirse & Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types*, Toronto, Canada, University of Toronto Press, , November 1984, 186-188

<sup>3</sup> Information regarding the program can be gotten at <https://careerdirect-ge.org/>

It was with the birth of their first child that the writer and his wife felt that they should once again connect with the organized church to provide a basis for their journey. They had both gone back to the church base of their childhood but found no peace with it and tried various denominations.

It was through the search for a pre-school for their son that they came upon the First United Methodist Church of St. Cloud, Florida. The writer's wife attended the church a few times and urged him to join her giving the religious thing one more try. The Rev. Bruce gave the call for communion reminding all that this was not a denominational table but the Lord's Table. All believers were welcomed to the meal. It was through this church that the writer felt that call to ministry rise. The writer then had an encounter that left him with a feeling that he should pursue eldership with the United Methodist Church (UMC). The writer began the process, applied and was accepted at Asbury Theological Seminary. He began that journey as a youth pastor.

#### The UMC Committee on Ordained Ministry

The Committee on Ordained Ministry voted not to certify the writer as a candidate for ministry as they had several areas of concern. They sighted as strengths a passion for the calling, very thoughtful, intelligent, and courageous and a commitment to creative ministry and reaching out to artists. They wanted the writer to broaden the vision for ministry and the ability to articulate this vision having concerns with the "us" (artists) vs. "them" (church) dichotomy.

"Although every pastor brings particular passions, interests, and callings to his/her ministry, effectively pastoring a church (and reaching beyond it) requires an ability to minister to a wide variety of people, including but not limited to groups that have not

always been well received in the church.” This is an odd statement in that if you ever had any dealings with the artistic community, you would recognize the wide spectrum of; personalities, cultures, political views, sexual orientation, creeds, and ethnicity were often times more representative of human existence rather than the often singular color and view walled up within the confines of a denomination church.

The committee noticed a tension between genuineness and hiddenness because of the writer being very open at times and presenting a very guarded image in both paperwork and interview. Then they placed a phrase which they never explained “an awareness of anger.” This was because the writer thought that he was about to experience the Spanish Inquisition and really was not sure what they were looking for.

The committee wanted the writer to participate in an Interpersonal Relations group to work on issues including: how to present yourself (denominational speak for how to address your superiors and stay in your place), clarification of the writer’s call (church speak for we don’t really want to deal with just those people), and issues in ministry (or see it only from our view). This was their way of putting the writer in his place for wanting to focus the ministry to be inclusive of people who do not look like, speak like, or act like them.

This was in part what the writer presented to the committee that sparked their response:

It is my belief that God is calling the arts back to His Church. It is from Him that the arts have sprung under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The vast majority of the churches do not minister to the people of the arts. It is only what we can get from the arts that they appear within the confines of most church structures. Most are not interested in fostering a community of the arts or the people who make up that small percentage of the population. It is after all very difficult to justify spending a portion of

your budget to reaching a section of the population that in most cases is less than one percent of the demographic make-up of a town or city.

I believe it is important for the church to target this section of the population because we have entered into a new era of storytelling – one that is dependent upon visual and auditory stimulation to enhance the electronic campfire (television/cable/satellite/computer) that glows blue through the night in our homes.<sup>4</sup> These creative individuals are the rediscovered storytellers. They are the ones who will be able to pass on the knowledge of the bible and the message of Christ as did the makers of medieval stained glass or the roving passion plays. We have moved from a printed society that is influenced by a multimedia sensory overload. It is with that in mind that I wish to focus on the incorporation and integration of the arts and the artists so that they can fulfill the destiny of the arts as laid out in Exodus 35:25-35 36:1-2.

...It has been from the time of the reformation that the Protestant tradition has chosen to throw this gift away or to limit it so that it is no longer a valued part of our existence as human beings called Christian.<sup>5</sup> They had done so to avoid what they perceived to be the abuse of those in the church that wished to buy their way into heaven and edify themselves at the expense of the people.<sup>6</sup> They have tried to eliminate the use of images so that people do not venerate the image rather than the actual spiritual principle it represents. They have for the most part with a few exceptions chosen to focus on the word (bible) and table. In doing so they have made outcasts of all those who practice the arts – dance, music, fine art, radio, television, motion pictures, etc. The arts have left the church and have made their own way. By relegating the arts and those who produce them to only (what the church wrongly perceives as) the outside world, we have condemned them to a hell of self-doubt and abuse. We have ignored the Great Commandment whose mandate is to make disciples (followers of

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<sup>4</sup> This was a concept fostered by the writings of Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan whose influence is felt through such phrases as “global village” and “the medium is the message”. The premise is that humanity has replicated the body through mechanization and electronics. The campfire that once was the center of passing on information/education has been replaced by the CRT/LED screen – an electronic campfire. This is sighted by McLuhan in many of his books, articles, and lectures – *Understanding Media, The Medium Is The Message*.

<sup>5</sup> This is a reference to the iconoclastic movement that was prevalent in the establishment of the Geneva, Switzerland church and became a part of the anti-Catholic rhetoric of the Protestant movement. This is documented in numerous histories of western culture, art and theology. There are other histories dealing with art forms such as theater that had their origins, adaptations and fostering by the church and religious practices. This study limits the amount of space that can be dedicated to it but does deserve a closer examination.

<sup>6</sup> This is a reference to the buying of indulgences, basically a get out of jail card.

Christ) of all people. We've done this because we have viewed artist of all types as sub-species not worthy of hearing the good news.

Artists don't clean up like the rest of the congregation and they don't look or act like the rest. Artists are pretty much what they are on the inside what they look like on the outside. This can be very threatening to most people. The church for the most part does not know what to do with them when they do have them.

When a church has the foresight to involve an artist in the church, they see the artist only as a commodity that might be used to produce a random banner, PowerPoint Presentation, bumper sticker or graphic for a tract to pass out.<sup>7</sup> They also might be useful for the occasional Christmas or Easter pageant. They do not recognize that artists do not have to be strictly used for church only propagation. The arts are there to edify just as a beautiful landscape, sunset or a person. They are there sometimes as a means of prevenient grace to lead a person to God. But all this is for God to decide and not a church council who is uncomfortable with a blue haired, dread locked, tattooed, and body pierced person who might be in their front row.

The writer did what was asked of him and put in the time and effort. However some of the criteria could not be met because of the nature of the involvement with the various technical ministries that the writer was involved in. The writer was then informed that the process for eldership would then require several more years because of missing a deadline for conference and not meeting exactly the set criteria. The writer then saw that it was an uphill battle. They could confirm the call but not see how it fit into their system. So the writer withdrew and sought another way.

### The Continuing Journey

The writer's wife and the writer sought what God would have them do. The town of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania kept coming up through meeting people, attending conferences, and in reading. So they knew that it would be a move to Pennsylvania.

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<sup>7</sup> This is a reference to the work of Franky Schaeffer called *Addicted to Mediocrity* that charges the interest by the church in the arts as merely mercenary and short sighted. It is a book worth looking into for the state of the arts in the church that still unfortunately exists. It is controversial in some aspects but a point to begin a dialog about the place of the arts in the church.

The traditional church is playing little at this point in the writer's call and at present the writer is licensed and ordained through Global Awakening.

The writer is now involved with an independent church by the name of Sound Truth Ministries (STM) whose focus is on the movement of the Holy Spirit and a complete healing ministry. The writer is in the process of re-imagining the arts ministry which had been called H.A.R.T (His Art, Retreat and Training) and is now Imago (Latin for image). The focus is not just specific to the arts but has been expanded to cover all creative aspects of human existence as it is expressed in people being created in the image of God. It also emphasizes the identity and value of the individual in fulfilling the true purposes of existence.

### Conclusion

The writer's experiences in various forms of leadership have been interesting. His viewpoint had been from that of a youth director, an audio/visual/computer technician, scheduler and office assistant, a church planter, a candidate for elder in the UMC, a worship leader and an assistant pastor. You get to see and hear unwelcomed things (politics, pettiness, backbiting, etc.) and those that bless you beyond measure (compassion, sharing, and people blessing people).

It has been fascinating to observe what people are doing to God's church, and how they try to force God into this tiny box of how and what God should be. This so that God functions only as a vending machine for their personal use. It has been fascinating to watch people take the phrase Jesus said go but have nothing and nowhere to go. They just believe as long as they are sending someone else they are making a difference. They

neglect the next part of the phrase – and make disciples - thus missing the point altogether. They wind up with something that they mistakenly call church that is inches deep and miles wide.

It has been sad to watch as people battle over the rotation of hymns versus praise choruses versus contemporary Christian music and miss the point that diversity is part of God's ultimate plan. It is sad to watch as people try to reinvent themselves and only attract their own kind and not reach out to all of God's people. It has been sad to watch as people fear change only to watch their own impending death both spiritually and physically brought on by stagnation. It has been sad to watch people being thrown out of work to balance a budget, increase the coffers of a church or minister and fund capital projects rather than continue ministries. It has been sad to watch a church turned into a business with a bottom line rather than a stewardship where the bottom line is God and His people. It is sad to watch a church driven only by the wealthy and powerful rather than the humble and meek.

The old guard of the organized Protestant religion has tried to teach the writer that God is a Republican and you cannot be a Christian if you are a Democrat or hold any other political view. They have tried to teach the writer that God is only on the side of the United States and that He waves only that flag because we are right in His eyes.

What the writer has learned is that God is not a respecter of persons and that God will do what God will do. The writer has learned that he is not God and the writer will know only what God wants him to know. The writer has learned that God will work with whomever and whatever it will take to do God's work – for God will raise up the rocks to praise if necessary.

The writer has learned that the church is sometimes an organization with no loyalty but only to one's self. People go where they are fed what they want. When that no longer occurs they move to a trough that features what they want and matches their sensibilities. He has seen people after a social club where they can come for an hour a week, pay dues to maintain the club, hear an inspirational feel good about yourself speech and go home place – with an occasional pot luck dinner or social event to participate in.

The writer has seen ministry turned into a career ladder to be climbed rather than a place to go lower still.

The writer has seen the church partitioned so that children and youth are seldom seen in worship and where they are not really welcomed. They are relegated to other buildings and other times. He has seen the old pushed aside for no other reason but the new. He has seen the old resent the youth and the youth resent the old. He has seen a church exist within a church where a group holds a worship service at the Sunday School Hour pressing for a new pastor until they get it. He has seen that same group poison the community to the point that it splits and is no longer viable. He has seen the brutality of struggles for power and allegiances amongst staff, ministries, school and church. The writer has seen the prophecy for churches crushed and destroyed.

Yet deep within the core of this all too human organization lays the heart and mind of those who truly seek the face and presence of God, who pray for the day when the presence of God will rise from the church and change its face forever. These are those who pray for the miracles and who have only the will of God on their minds and in their hearts. They want to be the image of God in whom they were created. These are the silent underbelly of the church where true Christianity takes place. Where one helps



another and does not look for recognition, power or prestige but rather only look to show others a glimpse of what heaven on earth would be and is. They accept all that come and point the way to the troubled. They feed the hungry, clothe the naked, aid the poor/widowed/orphaned, heal the sick, set the captives free, disciple others in their faith, declare the favorable year of our Lord and serve God. These are the true disciples and followers of Christ.

These are those who are the true body of Christ and the ones that the writer is humbled by. These are the ones whom the writer would treasure to wash their feet. They accept all because it is of God and not of their own hand. They take no credit but give honor and glory to God. They are what the body of Christ is all about. May the writer be a tenth of what and who they are.

It is truly remarkable to see the depths of diversity to which God has ascribed to his people. In many ways this is a difficult task to undertake. Years have been filled with high spots in seeing how God's people can reach out in times of need, how they respond to the call to prayer and deep faith upon their lives. It is fascinating to watch the discovery of their journey and where God is taking them.

The writer has learned that to be truly Christian is about operating in the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in each believer. It means developing a true and lasting relationship with God and seeking to always be in His presence.

The writer has been disappointed by some of the things that he has seen and experienced on both the personal and "professional" level but he has come to see that these are learning experiences. They are reminders of the frailties that we operate under as human beings. We are in process; we are being perfected and as of yet have not

reached that goal. On occasion we have been allowed that privilege of insight as to what that perfection may be. Even in the disappointments the writer has learned that God can make them out for His good and glory. Our goal is to remain with our eyes upon the prize.

## CONTEXT

The context of the HART. was dualistic in nature. The primary directive is expressed within its vision statement “All of the Arts for the Glory of God” and the general purpose of re-establishment of the creative image of God for all. However that needed to change and is reflected in the change of the name to Imago. Its purpose now is not just all of the arts for the glory of God but the realization of the image of God as the image of humanity. That image begins with creativity. To accomplish this, the ministry must set itself up in a dualistic fashion where each area overlaps upon the other. One facet specifically deals with the artistic community. The other must deal with the populations at large. The overall emphasis is then educational in nature.

At present Imago is working with STM which is the context of this study.

### Introduction

To understand the full implication for this in a ministry context, you have to look at the statistical information that is available on a local and national level. The writer will be dependent upon the information provided by Dr. Richard Florida, an American urban studies theorist, and his seminal book *The Rise of the Creative Class*. The writer is aware that this is a controversial text because of some of the conclusions that Dr. Florida makes.

However, the basis of his information is not in contention which makes it a valuable source of information. For the rest, the writer will site locally available statistics along with national census information.

### The Shift

“what we are going through is not any run-of-the-mill economic cycle. It's an enormous structural transformation -- similar if not larger in scale and scope to the shift from the Agricultural to the Industrial Age.”<sup>8</sup>

The economic crisis of 2009 was not just an indication of a corrupt banking system that was out of control, but was a place marker in the shifting emphasis from a gross domestic product (GDP) driven by the manufacturing basis to one driven by conceptual manipulation of ideas as product. If you look at the indices of what was going on, value was shifted from hard goods that rolled off an assembly line to ones where value was assumed as documented upon a piece of paper. Ideas were at this point a commodity. You can see it in the petroleum commodities market. Previously, when you purchased the commodity, you had to take delivery of the petroleum in order to complete the transaction. This is no longer the case. You simply purchase the paper that says that you own this much petroleum, you do not have to take delivery of it. You can then sell that piece of paper to another buyer's speculation based upon the idea that in the future prices will rise in response to political or consumer perceived demand. Thus you are generating wealth not on an actual product being delivered but on what that value represents.

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<sup>8</sup> Florida, Richard “The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited,” Huffington Post, last modified June 26, 2012. accessed September 29, 2012. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-florida/creativity-is-the-new-eco\\_b\\_1608363.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-florida/creativity-is-the-new-eco_b_1608363.html).

Ideas and concepts are driving the market even when actual goods are the result.

But what exactly does this mean? You have to look at the shift that has come since the dawn of the industrial revolution until now to understand what has occurred. You also have to have a basic understanding of how the capitalistic market functions. The writer will provide a primitive construct to aid in that understanding.

You are a member of a small community consisting of fifty individuals that represent ten families of five people each owning their own property for subsistence farming. You have come up with a way to make your work easier. It is a platform that you have mounted on four wheels and can be pulled by human or animal power. You can place people or goods to move them easily about from one place to another. You call it a wagon.

Your neighbor sees the benefit of this item and asks you to produce one for their family's use. He offers to trade you goods for your labor and for delivery of the wagon. You deliver the wagon and you receive the items agreed upon in trade. Another neighbor sees the wagon and wants one as well and orders one in trade as do the remaining families. Your market is dependent upon the scarcity of this item in a particular area that drives the demand for it.

You produce the wagons and that is the end of your wagon production that is unless you make an improvement to the existing wagon, come up with a better design, or expand your sales to another enclave, hamlet or town where there is no wagon to be had. This is the basis for the capitalist market. It is driven by production and consumption of goods. To keep the same system in place it requires a continual expansion of the market to new areas where the scarcity exists and you can fill the need for the product.

Innovation may have produced the first wagon but production drives the market. Your subsistence farming is no longer your only means of income. Your main source of economic growth or wealth is in the production of goods that others will purchase/trade. You do not produce the goods out of your need but out of others desire to obtain things that you can produce and they cannot.

If your market expands effectively, it may require the employment of others to help produce the wagon. The more the market expands the more workers you will need to produce the wagon. This will require your movement away from subsistence farming to a production/manufacturing based economy. Because of the impact the wagon has upon the efficiency of farming methods, fewer people are needed to produce the same amount of agricultural products.

There is also one other development. One of your neighbors has come up with a wagon design of his own and is actively marketing his version in areas that you wish to expand into. This means that you have to produce cheaper priced and better quality wagons to maintain your economic edge. With the introduction of assembly line technologies, you eventually will require fewer workers to produce more and more competitively priced wagons.

This is an extremely over simplified example but serves our purposes.

### From the Industrial to the Creative Age

The Industrial Age saw the United States rise to economic preeminence. The share of the Working Class or what Marx dubbed "the proletariat" surged to more than sixty percent of the US workforce in the 1880s and it didn't fall below 50 percent until the years immediately following World War II, when it began to decline steadily, falling to forty percent in 1970, thirty percent by 1990, and roughly twenty percent today. These blue-collar Working Class jobs include all blue-collar physical work, including

construction, transportation and maintenance. Workers who directly produce things in factories account for just six percent of the workforce and are expected to decline even further over the next decade to around five percent, roughly equivalent to the level of Agricultural jobs during the last great crisis of the 1930s.<sup>9</sup>

In order to understand the above statement, Dr. Florida gives us a chart for an added visual understanding that ties the concepts together.

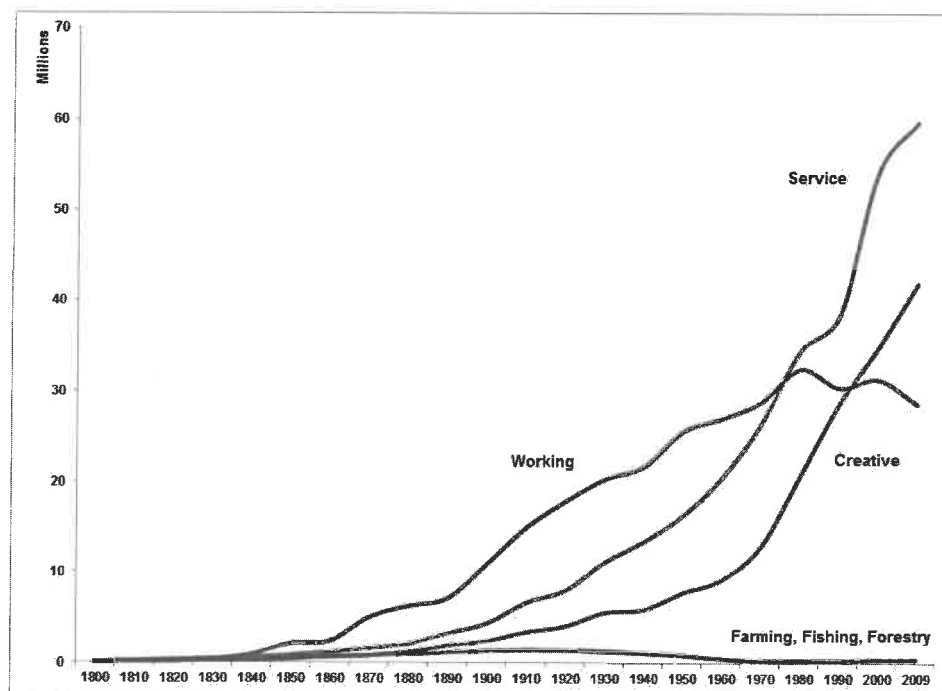


Figure 1.1 “(above) tracks Americans' employment from 1800 to 2010, across the nation's three great economic eras -- the Agricultural Age running from the time of Western settlement until the early to mid nineteenth century, the Industrial Age from the middle of the nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth, and the new Creative Age, from the mid-twentieth century to the present”<sup>10</sup>

What we see from the above graph that the agrarian culture has remained flat in employment growth. Manufacturing (denoted by the working line) spiked but has begun a steady decline. However the service and creative economies have shown a consistent if

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

not dramatic climb. It is interesting to note that the creative, service and working (manufacturing) sectors all began at approximately the same time yet the manufacturing (working) sector does not enjoy the same rate of percentage. From this you can deduce that the true engine driving the manufacturing sector was the creative/innovative forces.

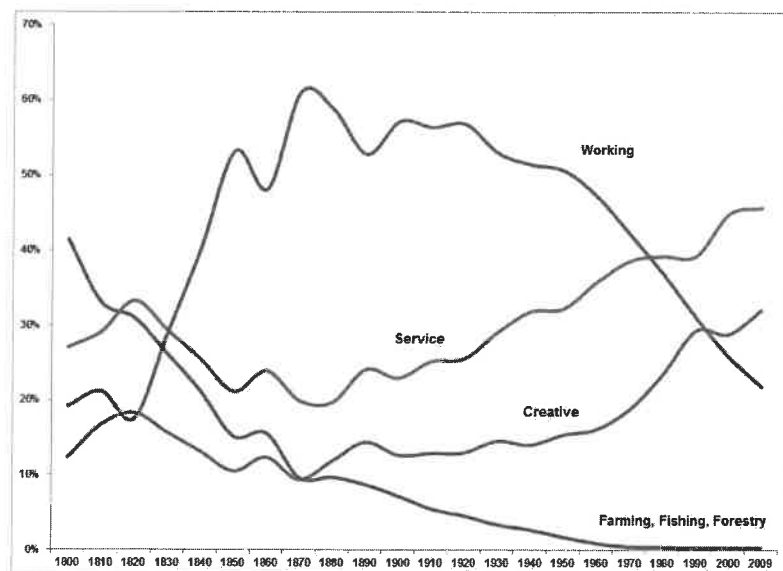


Figure 1.2 (above) shows the same trends, but this time as shares of the workforce.<sup>11</sup>

Within the manufacturing (hard goods) sector there has been a rapid decline since World War II. Why? It is because the manufacturing bases of other countries have rapidly increased and was fueled by the devastation of the World Wars which necessitated the rebuilding and thus modernization of these facilities. This then would indicate a widening of the global economic manufacturing basis causing a need to produce cheaper goods in order to maintain economic dominance.

As the need for fewer workers comes into being due to technological advances in production, the shift from a system of education that produces workers who can simply

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

read and follow instructions changes. It now must create innovative and creative thinkers. The problem is that creativity was not a part of the original industrialized educational national plan and still is not. Creativity and innovation was deemed necessary only for an elite class and not the general population. The objective of public education was to categorize and separate the intelligent from the worker. In this process, higher education was to serve as separator of the have's (those who owned the manufacturing process) from the have not's (those who would work for the owners). Thus it is the creating of a defined social class and stratum. The problem with this is that the new economic axiom requires that all human beings become creative.

This flies in the face of continual educational practices that are class driven. Class is defined by the distinction of the industrial worker (those that produce the goods) and management (those who direct the actions of the workers and the goods they manufacture). The continual diminishing role of the arts (history, geography, civics, music, rhetoric, art, drama) in favor of hard sciences and math from school curriculum is still a leftover of the industrial educational process. The emphasis is on getting and keeping a job. It is not on creative solutions and innovation which is what is needed. The result is the creation of a downward spiral in test scores that are driven by the industrialized view of education. The failure of this system is in its inability to view the statistical implications we have already sited. Additional supportive statistical information for the need and value of creative education can be found in the Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Kennedy Center. The problem is that the manufacturing sector is no longer driving the market economy and yet we are still using this model of educational practice. This calls to mind Albert Einstein's



definition of insanity – doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results.

“And now creativity ‘the ability to create meaningful new forms,’ as The Random House Webster's Dictionary puts it--has become both the driving force of economic progress and the decisive source of competitive advantage.

The Creative Age has been distinguished by the rise of two great social classes. The first is the Creative Class, workers in science and technology, arts, culture and entertainment, healthcare, law and management, whose occupations are based on mental or creative labor. The second and larger one is the Service Class, whose members prepare and serve food, carry out routine clerical and administrative tasks, provide home and personal health assistance, do janitorial work, and the like. The Service Class has grown alongside the Creative Class, rising from twenty percent of the workforce in the late nineteenth century and thirty percent in the 1950s to almost half of the workforce, 60 million plus workers, today.

The Creative Class, which comprised less than ten percent of the workforce in the late nineteenth century and no more than 15 percent for much of the twentieth, began to surge in the 1980s. Since that time more than twenty million new Creative Class jobs were created in the United States. This epoch-defining class now numbers more than forty million workers, a third of the workforce, and it generates more than \$2 trillion in wages and salaries--more than two thirds of the total US payroll. An additional seven million or so Creative Class jobs will be created over the next decade, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics projections. Members of the Creative Class engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education. Interestingly enough, however, the Creative Class is not simply another name for the college educated. While nearly three quarters of college graduates belong to the Creative Class, four in ten of its members do not have college degrees, but still engage in work that is creative by definition.”<sup>12</sup>

As seen in the above statements, the industrialized class distinctions of worker and management are no longer applicable. The distinction of people is no longer just a matter of which end of production you are placed on; it is now a matter of which side of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

the creative equation you are on. Although Dr. Florida describes this in terms of those who create (creative class) and those who support them (service class), it really doesn't take into full account how each of these sectors must function as creative entities. He still uses class distinctions. This does point to a basic conclusion no matter how you view it or by what terms you use. It not only requires a different type of educational system but also a different type of thinking that is contrary to the predominant Protestant work ethic of the United States which requires production.

The shift that is to happen must happen in a two phased approach. It is a national issue with local roots. This is where an understanding of the local societal make-up is tantamount. There is a striking difference in approach between rural and urban (inclusive of suburban) social constructs. However the basic application remains the same – education. The problem with both either conservative or liberal thinking is that the purpose of education is not strictly for the purpose of procuring employment but as the Socratic dictum implies that education is the beginning of the journey to begin to know where to look for answers. As is stated an education guarantees that you absolutely positively without a shadow of a doubt do not know anything but you do know where to begin to look for the answers. Here is where the church can play an important role. The Protestant church was at the center of this type of industrial educational environment. It provided the necessary moral and ethical framework for this type of system to occur

“We must remove the central props that are holding up the old economic order--the incentives and subsidies that keep the badly broken housing-auto-energy complex breathing--and invest in the new economic order, smoothing the path to its transition by bringing more workers and Americans into its orbit.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid

The bigger task is both to add to and improve the remaining two-thirds of jobs. The only way to do this is to essentially creatify them. It's happening already in advanced manufacturing plants that no longer view workers solely as a source of brute physical labor but as members of innovating, knowledge-generating and problem-solving teams.

....we need a new social compact....this new social compact must be fundamentally in sync with the demands of the new Creative Age. To that end, it must invest in our most important economic asset--the creativity of every single citizen and human being--in order to upgrade and generate new higher-paying jobs, address the gross inequities in our economy and society, and lay the institutional foundations for a new era of shared prosperity.”<sup>6</sup>

Herein lays the issue. Creativity and the act of being creative are attributes of the image of God. We, as human beings, are thus imbued with creativity. Pablo Picasso states it succinctly, “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.” Creativity has been trained out of the individual as the result of the predominate puritanical educational thought that creativity is not productivity. Amongst this mistaken concept is the idea that creativity is a leisurely pursuit and only limited to the realm of the fine arts. It is a concept that has its origins in the Reformation that produced the Protestant work ethic. Creativity is not viewed as an important part of daily life. At issue is the concept that you can measure the degree to which you are saved – thus favored by God, through the amount of goods you produce. This finds its roots in Calvinistic thought. If you do not produce goods, it then can be said that it is obvious that you are not a part of the chosen – the saved.

“According to Weber (1904, 1905), it was John Calvin who introduced the theological doctrines which combined with those of Martin Luther to form a significant new attitude toward work. Calvin was a French theologian whose concept of predestination was revolutionary. Central to Calvinist belief was the Elect, those persons chosen by God to inherit eternal life. All other people were damned and nothing could change that since God was unchanging. While it was impossible to know for certain whether a

person was one of the Elect, one could have a sense of it based on his own personal encounters with God. Outwardly the only evidence was in the person's daily life and deeds, and success in one's worldly endeavors was a sign of possible inclusion as one of the Elect. A person who was indifferent and displayed idleness was most certainly one of the damned, but a person who was active, austere, and hard-working gave evidence to himself and to others that he was one of God's chosen ones (Tilgher, 1930).”<sup>14</sup>

“The work ethic is a cultural norm that places a positive moral value on doing a good job and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Cherrington, 1980; Quinn, 1983; Yankelovich & Immerwahr, 1984). Like other cultural norms, a person's adherence to or belief in the work ethic is principally influenced by socialization experiences during childhood and adolescence. Through interaction with family, peers, and significant adults, a person "learns to place a value on work behavior as others approach him in situations demanding increasing responsibility for productivity" (Braude, 1975, p. 134). Based on praise or blame and affection or anger, a child appraises his or her performance in household chores, or later in part-time jobs, but this appraisal is based on the perspective of others. As a child matures, these attitudes toward work become internalized, and work performance is less dependent on the reactions of others.

Children are also influenced by the attitudes of others toward work (Braude, 1975). If a parent demonstrates a dislike for a job or a fear of unemployment, children will tend to assimilate these attitudes. Parents who demonstrate a strong work ethic tend to impart a strong work ethic to their children.

Among the mechanisms provided by society to transfer the culture to young people is the public school. One of the functions of schools is to foster student understanding of cultural norms, and in some cases to recognize the merits of accepting them. Vocational education, for example, has as a stated goal that it will promote the work ethic (Gregson, 1991; Miller, 1985). Reubens (1974) listed "inculcation of good work attitudes" as one of the highest priorities for high school education. In the absence of early socialization which supports good work attitudes, schools should not be expected to completely transform a young person's work ethic orientation, but enlightening students about what the work ethic is, and why it is important to success in the contemporary workplace, should be a component of secondary education.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Roger B. Hill Ph.D., “Historical Context of the Work Ethic,” History of Work Ethic, last modified June 05, 2005, accessed October 2, 2012, <http://rhill.coe.uga.edu/workethic/hist.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

It is then a church matter to re-establish the creative image of God as a birth right of all humanity.

### Local Context

Understand the complexity of the issue, you have to take into consider the context of local church. The area that the writer's ministry is in is Mid-central Pennsylvania. The population is 39,819 that has a rate increase of 0.3% and is ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in state growth. It has a 97.9% white race makeup. This means there is no racial diversity. Racism is not hidden and is openly discussed using all the familiar stereotypical derogatory terminology with great aplomb. They are traditionalists at all costs. A phrase that is readily heard and often repeated is that "we have never done it that way before and we never will."

The breakdown of those who have a formal education is: 46.3 % having a High School diploma, 14.3% having some college or an A.A., 7.9% having a B.A. and 4.6% having a Masters, professional or doctorate degree totaling 73.1% .<sup>16</sup> This leaves a large percentage of the population as uneducated or not having finished high school. The area has been historically an agrarian culture with over 800 working family farms. It also has a dependency upon wood products and as such has a limited manufacturing base. That sector has lost 7% of its workforce due to closures and is facing more. That 7% loss represents 36% of the total employment losses the area has suffered. Of the area's ten

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<sup>16</sup> "Synder County Quick Facts," State and County Quick Facts, last modified July 08, 2014, accessed September 29, 2012, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/42/42109.html>.

major employers, three are educational (two area school districts and a university), four are modular home builders, a meat processing plant and one is retail.<sup>17</sup>

Politically the area is extremely conservative with a strong Republican Party base. This area has voted traditionally no lower than 60% for Republican Party candidates since its inception with only one exception, that being the race between Taft and Roosevelt.<sup>18</sup>

Culturally it is very limited sighting only its German language background and a few state parks for recreational purposes. This is in spite of having a cultural heritage of a major music school (no longer in existence), a violin manufacturer (non-existent), and the home of a librettist who worked with and for Mozart.

There is one University but it is isolated from the rest of the population. It has little or no interaction with the population in general outside of the town in which it resides.

Because of these factors there is a great migration of the young to other areas seeking better employment opportunities and living conditions. This brain and age drain is having severe and negative impact in the area.

Religious affiliation is categorized as United Methodist (30.6%) comprising the largest denomination followed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (22.4%), United Church of Christ (11.8%), Old Order Mennonite (8.2%), Mennonite Church USA

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<sup>17</sup> "Synder County, Pennsylvania," Wikipedia, last modified October 30, 2014, accessed September 29, 2012, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snyder\\_County,\\_Pennsylvania#Politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snyder_County,_Pennsylvania#Politics).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

(3.5%), The Wesleyan Church (2.4%) and Old Order Amish (2.4%) making up the majority of the denominations represented. The rest are at 1% or less.<sup>19</sup>

The church that the writer is affiliated with (STM) is non-denominational having a Pentecostal basis that believes in the full gospel inclusive of spiritual gifts, healing and belief in the supernatural lifestyle. However the congregation looks toward the leadership for direction. They have a Mosaic view of leadership in that they prefer to have the pastor be the intermediary for them. They are nominal in their Christian walk being church only attendees. They do not seek true discipleship or the opportunity to go deeper. They are seekers of the next touch of God without seeking the full presence of God in their daily existences. They do not expect the presence of God in their lives only seeking occasional touches of His power. There are a few who do seek to go deeper but they see themselves as being limited in their ability to do so. This church considers itself an anomaly for this area.

The churches in this area are generational. It means that the same family can trace its roots back several generations in attendance. Typical of this area in general, the same names that can be found as street names are the very same family names that own the land, and attend the churches. Not much changes. The churches are primarily family organizations with family members sitting on the same boards generationally. Little outside or denominational influence is evident. There are a few church hoppers but they are not the norm.

Outreach is often limited to or defined as a community fund raising event or the occasional Angel food distribution point. Church run food pantries are a rarity.

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<sup>19</sup>Dale E. Jones, "Religions in Snyder County," City-Data, 2002, accessed October 03, 2012, <http://www.city-data.com/county/religion/Snyder-County-PA.html>.

Creativity is not very evident in these churches. Most are traditionalists. There are a few who feature their version of a contemporary or blended service but this is in addition to denominational liturgy. Creative church practice is limited to an occasional seasonal drama, PowerPoint presentation, praise band and the rare if ever liturgical dance ensemble.

Within the overall context, there is one overriding element that is typical no matter the age demographic. This characteristic runs deeper within gender definitions in that the prospects of the female gender are greatly limited not only educationally but economically and sociologically as well. Most of these patterns come from an ultra-conservative expression of familial patterning and generational imprinting. These all play significant roles in the most important aspect of the individual identity.

What you are in this lineage is what you do. You are defined not only in gender specific roles but historical patterning of what that looks like. The economic sociological construct with limited prospect of employment possibilities further limits identity within the area and may very well contribute to patterns of substance, personal, and sexual abuse. The need to block the overwhelming sense of hopelessness, helplessness, and meaninglessness all serve to perpetuate patterns of abuse in one form or another – familial, institutional, and sociological. Services are limited and hard to obtain. Internet access is limited or nonexistent. Economic opportunities are stymied. Public transportation is nonexistent. Self-reliance is the mantra although generations rely upon public assistance of one type or another – child care, food stamps, welfare, SSI, disability payments, farming supplement, etc. Although they rail against entitlement programs politically, they are the first in line to get their piece of the pie.



Those who do not fit within the accepted sociological patterns are unwelcome and leave the area as soon as they can to seek other opportunities. The stagnation of the population growth is reflective of this. The ultra-conservative Old-Amish orders and Mennonites are moving into this rural community because of the availability of inexpensive farming land and the isolation and the intrusion of modern society is at a minimum. Diversity is not a part of the culture. It is shunned, unwanted, and unwelcomed. All of this continues the pattern of the closed ended society.

Religion plays a definite divisive role in the majority of the area. Many churches are “family owned and operated” generational foundations that hold fast and steady to hard-core sociological construct based upon ultra-conservative values of past eras. Race and gender equality are issues that have gained little if any ground within this area where stereotypes are the rule of thumb. This is a predominantly and almost exclusively a white low income enclave that functions by relying heavily upon nepotism and family connection.

Cessasionist theology is prevalent but not directly in the context of Sound Truth Ministries. Word of Faith is the foundational aspect of theological trends within the STM with tinges of Charismatic/Pentecostalism. Charismatic/Pentecostal churches influences are at a minimum in the area and are viewed with suspicion. Modern worship patterns are limited. Churches fostering this style and trend are often referred to as those rock and roll churches. STM views itself as an outsider but is substantially a part of the ultra-conservative life of the area.

The fear of getting too large seems to guide STM and is a part of its subliminal message. This is part of the suspicion of federal and state government with a dose of large corporation indifference to the economics of the area. All of these entities have promised much and delivered little. To put it in the context an old truism, they have all come with “hands full of gimme and mouths full of much obliged.” Corporations have come quickly and moved on just as quickly leaving higher unemployment and resentment in their wake. Most employment opportunities are low pay and part time. This area is/was part of the rust and wood belt.

Revival is asked for but is mired in the tent revival paradigm but is used as church growth. STM holds a slightly different paradigm that runs closer to that of Azusa Street with miracles, signs and wonders but holds back from full implementation. The area is a throwback to the Calvinist model of getting them saved accounting systems of heavenly reward. The more you save the bigger your heavenly mansion. Discipleship is used as another buzz word for Sunday school/class attendance.

Because of the lack of economic opportunity the prosperity gospel holds sway and credibility amongst many who live in the community. This is also true of STM though they run with a less aggressive form of it. This reflects the Calvin based theology of accumulation of rewards as proof of salvation which is institutionalized in many of the established churches. It is also a referral to Old Testament ideas of a lack of health, wealth and prosperity as punishment for sins. STM does not hold to this but it still has hold for many. Therefore it is believed that if you are a true believer you should have all of these things as proof of you being saved. Leadership models are predominantly male

dominant and top down interactions. I am the pastor, you are not, I hear from God and you do not. Therefore you must obey the pastor as the final authority is the modality of keeping things under control and congregations in their place.

Governmental and emergency services are at a minimum and fractional at best. Police presence is nominal to non-existence. It is surprising that more of a libertarian form of political philosophy is not the rule of the day. This however is not the case as they are very law and order oriented and this falls into their religious practices and beliefs. Gun ownership, hunting, and fishing are largely a part of the culture and hotly defended as the American way of life and second amendment guaranteed. The NRA is almost a religion in this area.

### Conclusion

It may be an insurmountable task to introduce the concept of the personal identity being the *imago Dei* (image of God), ability to do and achieve the purposes and plans of God through *dynamis Theo* (power of God), and the introduction of the will of God in the breaking forth of the *bassileia tou Theo* (kingdom of God). They are not necessarily open to the teaching as they have certain prejudices described earlier. The mantra is “we’ve never done it that way before” with “and we never will” that holds much back. This can be considered dogma carved in stone and used to beat to death anything or anyone that would challenge it.

Within STM previous attempts at Charismatic introduction had limited success. They were largely based on brief demonstration formats and forced marches. It was more of a thrill seeking sessions of “look how I can get wrecked in the Spirit”. It was a program not a lifestyle implementation. It was a momentary distraction of the supposed

reality of everyday existence. At best it was a “been there, done that, and have the t-shirt to prove it so what do you have next for me to experience” attitude. It is also a part of the mindset that religion is a Sunday kind of thing and only infiltrates the week when it becomes a personal confrontation.

Religion only enters the work week if it becomes an ethical issue or question that involves someone else’s behavior toward that individual. Example is “how can they be a Christian and do that to me.” It is an outcropping of the Greek/Gnostic separation of the spiritual and the physical prevalent in Calvinistic theology. What needs to happen is a full scale show and tell discipleship model development as demonstrated by Jesus and/or a full blown encounter with God to counter this philosophical/religious/cultural mindset.

Lack of true identity seems to be symptomatic of STM. Identity within modern Western influenced society is not based on who you actually are but rather on what you do. Their identity is not tied specifically to familial constructs although it is a major influence that can determine what you do. In familial relationships your identity and position are directly tied to the amount of income and things you can bring in. If you are unable or limited in the ability, your value to the family is in jeopardy. This also applies to those who are on disability and what benefits they can garner for family support. You are judged on what you can bring rather than who you are. It intensifies the identity crisis because your value is what you can do, what income you can produce and what you can consume.

Watch modern advertising as it makes the case for this type of identity assimilation.<sup>20</sup> There the typical individual is shown to be lacking in identity because of something they do not have. This lack is translated into the possibility expressed in the wish of if only I could have, so I could do, and then I can be. It is a world view based in the past or the future and not in a present. It cannot be satisfied because you must consume. It is by the conspicuous consumption of items that you are seen have the right to belong to this society and the dreams that it fosters. Cell phones, cars and clothing are but the tip of the iceberg if you are to be a part of the identity called American Christianity. You are what you consume.

Consumption is dictated by the latest and greatest which is not governed by longevity, ethical or moral character of the individual or the society. It is the assumption of identity by consumption. There are people who have the latest smart phone, wear designer labels and live in the most sordid conditions with a 50 inch flat screen TV with cable/satellite. They may not have enough money to pay their bills or purchase food but they have their entitled piece of the American Dream and all that entails. They can then be assured of their value and identity. Take away capability to consume and you have

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<sup>20</sup> Central to this concept is the writings of Edward L. Bernays, considered to be the father of modern advertising. He had written two seminal books, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, written in 1923 and *Propaganda*, written in 1928. The following quote is from *Propaganda* which reflects this concept. "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. ...We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society. ...In almost every act of our daily lives, whether in the sphere of politics or business, in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons...who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind."

affectively removed their identity and value. To borrow a phrase that I first heard from Tony Campolo, we suffer from affluenza. It is a society of instant gratifications rather than progression toward perfection.

Control the identity of the individual and you control the entirety of the society in which that individual participates.<sup>21</sup> This has been a political fact of life through the ages. It can be attested to in some of the worst and best political movements. Central to this is the Roman conception of the idea of bread and circus.<sup>22</sup> Distraction and distortion are the main tools and ingredients of this deception. This has been biblically attested to since the Adamic saga of the fall. The construct is the deception of image. Distort the image and you confuse the issue. The distortion of image was a confabulation of Lucifer. The manipulation of the words and intents of the original instructions, image, and enablement of the Creator caused the distortion of the image to take place. It was a logical approach which reconfigured the identity equation from a to be, to do, to have; towards a to do, to have, to be or to have, to do, to be.

That is what the church has done with its constant emphasis upon a cross and salvation centric message. If I work to be saved, I can have heavenly rewards. I will then be a son or daughter of God. It is a works generated theology no matter how you alter the definition or application. You work for your salvation by performance and it is proved by accumulation of “blessings”.

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<sup>21</sup> Again another reference to the works of Edward L. Bernays

<sup>22</sup> Paul Veyne, *The Roman Empire*, Arthur Goldhammer, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), Provides an excellent account of the Roman Empire and its practices that corroborate this information.

Protestants may call it saved by grace but you have to follow the Roman Road and perform a particular ritual, say the right words and yes be baptized before the rest can happen. Salvation is a gift and all that needs to be done is to say thank you. This Protestant system ignores the gifting and enablement that comes with the true identity in the *imago Dei* (image of God) which produce the fruits of the Spirit and not just consumable artifacts to prove ones salvation. It does not take the full consideration of the entire plan of redemption. It leaves out the true identity of individual as the image of God which gives them ability to do and thus to have. It has been an escape from Rome and yet they are still hoping to achieve it. Catholic doctrine is just another format of this impossible task of working out your salvation. It is all a series of if only events that if I please God by some performance or act I can get into the kingdom. The only thing we need to do is accept the gift and then assume the identity.

The image of God (*imago Dei*) consists of the root word that means to imitate. The imitation is none other than being what we would first learn about in Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. Specific in this discussion is the elements found within Genesis 1:26 – 31. The entire programmatic entity of Jesus' existence followed the pattern of imitation of what it was the Father was doing. Jesus was imitating the Father and because he was about the Father's business (Luke 2:49) what he is, is what he does. He could only do what the Father is doing because his identity is linked directly to the image of the Father. If you see Jesus, you see the Father. (John 5:19-47)

The *imago Dei* is the key element within any true dynamic. (Genesis 1:26-31, John 14:6 - 16:1) It continues within that context with being given (gifted) dominion and thus the power (*dynamis*) to act upon the whole of creation as outlined in Genesis 1: 27-

31. The fact is that if we are to start at any point within the discussion of any individual or for that matter anything, we must first speak of its identity. It is within that identity that the individual finds meaning, value and purpose with the power and ability to act. Without it there is a tendency to take on or try varied false identities looking to find ones meaning in life, what value one has and what the purpose of life is. It leads to misplaced action and wielding of power. You are not your job, political affiliation, economic standing, gender, sexual orientation, race, or creed. Simply you are the image of God. Given the communality of identity of which we are; it runs counter to the cultural aspect of meaning, value and purpose. Culture makes it increasingly easy to obtain, gain, and maintain the wrong image and likeness through you are what you consume and own.

What must be further implemented in any teaching praxis is the elemental key of the Christian life; the imitation of Christ that is to take place. Within that imitation is the capacity of true individual enlightenment and the ability to clearly see beyond the confines of the human heart to that of the Father's heart. It is the ability to know. In this is our chief concern of existence: the meditation of the life of Christ, the imitation and the action through the empowerment (grace) provided. This is not a B-movie emotionless portrayal but an active integration of our existence to influence those spheres of gifting to which we have been given.

Within the fullness of the *imago Dei*, we have adopted and adapted the message. We have distorted it to the point that the church worships a powerless baby and a broken savior. It quickly skips over Pentecost which brings about the fullness of the image of God as described in Genesis. The problem is that churches did this not necessarily to make it culturally relevant (relevancy has never really been an issue as the identity



message is always relevant) but to make it culturally acceptable until it was passed along to the present times. This distorted image has produced an incomplete and powerless church that is no different from the rest of the world in its ability to change its context or bring about the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

What this does is eliminates aspects of the full gospel message. It has been the almost exclusive teaching of Paul's theology in the context of the cross and Roman Road. Churches have become little more than salvation stations whose sole principal and interest is replicating the saved rather than the *imago Dei*. This is a not uniquely a Protestant issue that in its haste to disassociate itself from the Medieval Catholic Church, it took up preaching Paul as the gospel and Jesus as the epistle to Paul. It has become the imitation of Paul rather than the *imago Dei*.

The gospel of Paul is continually preached from pulpits and most certainly from the context. Teachings are rarely focused upon the synoptic or John's gospel. Those are only referred to as supportive documentation of Paul's theological treatise. This is an historical issue dating back to the times of Luther and Calvin spurred on in their rush to disassociate themselves from the Catholic Church. Luther's attitude was that the gospels could be generally ignored in favor of Paul's theology with a smattering of the use of John's gospel because it has the least amount of miracle references.

The problem with this approach is that you eventually become like the object that you are trying to separate yourself from. Simply put what you do not like or hate in others is exactly what you do not like or hate in yourself. The railing against the mystical and philosophical emphasis turned exactly into the adaptation of the same branding under the guise of *sola scriptura* and *sola fidelia*. Add to it the denial of miracles, signs and

wonders. It is wrongly justified with the philosophical argument that we do not need this type of authentication in that we have the complete word of God encapsulated in scripture. This mirrors the *halakah* of Judaism which states that God gave us the scriptures and humanity the right to interpret it, so God has nothing more to say.

The Reformation represents a power struggle more than it does an overall theological revolution. What I mean by this is simply it was an orchestrated rebellion of the abuses of the hierarchy of an organization and their particular emphasis. It was a legitimate proposition but it soon turned from being about reform to political power struggles. To be crass it becomes a matter of you say po-tot-o and I say po-tay-toe. It was a control issue of sola scriptura versus doctrine and whether by grace or action you are saved. These are control issues of power structures and those who hold them. They are semantic arguments.

To prove their points, reformers on both sides went to extremes to score points. These are the leftovers of the imposition of a hierarchal structure of Roman rule. Calvin added to the argument with the inclusion of a work ethic that measured your level of being saved by the amount of accrued blessings of material goods. They argued over baptism rites and communion forms. These nuances have little to do with the day to day existence of believers outside of the political structures of church and state under which they live. They have little to do with the actual practical ministry. They have little or nothing to do with the kingdom of God, the Isaiah 61/Luke 4 declarative mission statement, or the Matthew 28: 17-20 directives.

The liberations that did take place were short lived. The question that has yet to be asked is why? The answer is because the core basic element that alters the complete

picture has been ignored and confused. The why is a simple factor that you must go back to the beginning to affect the future. To put it in terms of the linguistically charged terminologies that is a future perfect tense issue.

The reintroduction of Jesus as the redeemed image of humanity as the *imago Dei* is absolutely critical to reestablishing the full redemption message of the gospel as outlined in the Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:14-19 pericopes. The Spirit of God being placed upon Jesus is recovering the mantle of humanity that had been removed during the fall – thus the inference to the nakedness of humanity. It is the re-empowering of to alter, adapt, free, and create acting as the Father would act. The entirety of the periscopes is set within a linguistically future perfect tense. Jesus states that a process has begun. He had been anointed which was something that had started at a point of time in the past. The process now is in action because part of that anointing is to be empowered to act. That act linguistically is to do which is a process that is taking place in the now. These then are actions that had been started in the past, are going on now, and will be completed at some time in the future eschatological *parousia*.

Jesus speaks of the *basileia tou Theo* (the kingdom of God) as entering into it placing stress on the ethical prerequisites involved in their approach. Jesus' entering into the kingdom speaks of the process of making the kingdom apparent in the now, developing it as it goes and completing it as a future action. In the sense of a linguistic statement it would be considered to be in the future perfect tense as well. Again it was an action that was started in the past, is continuing and being acted upon in the present, and will be completed sometime in the future. The conclusion is that *basileia* in the now

definition is the “in-breaking of God’s dynamic saving power or reign, which can affect the whole person.” The very word in-breaking is a process oriented word again as a future perfect linguistic indicator.

There is another point of significance that takes place by the *dynamis Theou* (power of God) that comes upon them. The demonstration of the power of God is central to the full message of the Gospel as discussed in Jon Ruthven’s *What Is Wrong with Protestant Theology*. It is clarified under the text of John 3: 3, 5 where Jesus links birth by the Spirit and entering into the kingdom of God.

What does this all mean? Basically the power of God is displayed within the now. The aspect of miracles, signs and wonders is not a debate at this point nor should it be. Although they are not common within western based churches they should be. The only reason that they are not is because of the refusal to admit them as a regular fact of kingdom living and imitation of Jesus as the *imago Dei*. It is the continued concept of philosophical thinking that separates the spiritual (as the good) from the physical (as the evil) that puts a stop to full kingdom living. It is the practice of Christian thought that wrongly teaches that once you are saved, you are to wait for your reward in a future time. It is a future based practice of delaying the kingdom in the now which is completely and utterly anti-biblical in premise. Jesus specifically states that the kingdom of God is at hand. If all the literal scholars are to follow their own thought patterns in analysis, they must conclude that this statement clearly means it is reachable in the now.

The arrival of the kingdom of God is the re-establishing on earth as it is in heaven, the *imago Dei* (image of God), and the *dynamis Theo* (power of God). What is delayed is the full manifestation of the kingdom of God (*basileia tou Theou*) which is to

completely come with the *parousia* – the second coming of Christ. Jesus’ point is a continual advancement as scripted from Genesis – taking dominion, subduing the earth, and being fruitful and multiplying. The significance is in what Jesus demonstrated within his ministry. Jesus fully comprehends that the *Basileia tou Theou* in his ministry represents a redemptive action and a healing activity as witnessed in both Matthew 11: 2-19 and Luke 7: 18-35 within the now. This is not to say that the fullness of its presence is within the now rather just the opposite that the power can and is being demonstrated now and is progressively exponentially occurring as witnessed by Jesus’ statement in greater works will you do. The message of Jesus then revolves around the demonstrable power now, the redeemed identity at present (Luke 15:11-32) and the fullness of the kingdom/dominion progressively later but still in evidence within the now. In Luke 15: 11-32 the demonstration of restored identity is powerfully evident. The prodigal father – not the son – demonstrates the now in the restoration of the identity of the lost even as they are not yet fully restored. It is an unconditional return to former placement with the Father’s kingdom – despite the present condition of the one returning. Therefore it is a process but one that empowers the individual to act as inheritors within the now but goes forward in rebuilding in the now and in the future.

Pauline emphasis becomes increasingly vast as the timing of the *parousia* is moved from the soon to a future manifestation. This shift necessitates a change in the message. This shift places undo emphasis on the *parousia* to the point that the church is no longer relevant because it displays nothing in the now. We have lost generations in waiting for things as prescribed in such books as *The Late Great Planet Earth* which has an entirely apocalyptic message. The advice is to head for the hills because it is all going

to hell in a hand basket and wait for Jesus to clean up the mess. It eliminates preaching the gospel to the poor, to proclaiming release to the captives, and recovering sight to the blind, freeing those who are oppressed, and proclaiming the favorable year of the Lord. It lacks hope in the now, and power in the now. This is not the gospel or the good news. This is Fox News.

Paul's predominance among the western evangelicals has negatively shaped the theological conversations with an over emphasis of the eschatological and apocalyptic. In contrast the writings of the other apostles are veritable synoptic repeats of the full gospel message of Jesus; a consistent message of the Rabbi under whom they have become the *imago Dei*. Paul on the other hand establishes a discourse based teaching method to match the Greek influenced philosophical culture to which he serves. The modality of that teaching is the suffering Christ, whom we have been crucified with, having died to ourselves, and who await the coming of the fullness of dominion/kingdom in an eschatological/apocryphal victory. The emphasis for Paul is on the informational not the transformational, at least with the text that we have.

The need in the immediate context is to turn the emphasis of Pauline philosophical informational theology to one of Jesus' entering into the kingdom in the now. Part of the process would be to assume the full identity of the redeemed image of man. That redeemed image of man is the image of God in the demonstrated power of the kingdom, not only as information to be taught but as transformational demonstrations of the *basileia tou Theou*. This brings us to the basis of a discipleship model.

The basis for discipleship is a social contract between two or more individuals having at its core a hierarchy of relationship. That relationship is that of a superior (in the

sense of one that has been through the process, can teach, model and demonstrate it) and a subordinate(s) (those entering into the process who will then replicate what they have been given) and is to be called a “discipleship community.” Here the individuals involved in the community interact according the established role. This is the establishment of what a church should really look like. It should be a center for a discipleship community based upon teaching, enabling, empowering, worshiping, bringing in and sending out. It is a reconstruction of the parent-child relationship within the context of an educational system for the transmittal of the image of God (*imago Dei*), power of God (*dynamis Theou*) and the kingdom of God (*basileia tou Theou*) culture. The community does take on all of the responsibilities of that structure in how the individuals relate to one another. Thus the teacher takes upon the role of mother and/or father and the students takes the role of brothers and sisters. (You can find this often in Jesus’ speech patterns of how he refers to the disciples.) This relational interaction is the intensification of communal interplay between functions of education and family and is a return to childhood to be reformed/transformed as a human being into the image of God (*imago Dei*). In the discipleship structure that transformative response is for the disciple to fully embody the teacher’s/master’s achievements. The ultimate teacher is Jesus in that he fully re-created the image in total of the teacher/master which is God.

There are other important distinctions between the traditional education methodologies and that of discipleship. The school’s function in traditional education is mainly to transmit knowledge so that a pupil may become functional participants in the religious and/or cultures of their time. This is a *formative* knowledge in that it shapes the basis for the individuals’ identity and their ability to creatively participate and contributes

to societal structure. This then is the base line for human interaction within the context of that society/religion/culture. Unfortunately this has been the entirety of the church model and differs from discipleship. It does not reflect the fullness of what the discipleship modality should and could be within the context of the true church which is the complete body of Christ, the image of God, in human form and function.

In discipleship, the individual is challenged to recreate, reformulate and transform their basic identity through emulation of the master that is modeled. This then is *transformative* thus creating a new being. You are then transformed from glory to glory. The axiom is that the discipleship community becomes the medium for transformative knowledge, emulated by the master through impartation.

The primary goal of the community is proof of the disciples' possession of that transformative knowledge. (It can be verified in the fruits of the Spirit because of the gifts of the Spirit transmitted by the transformed individual). This entails imitation and/or emulation of the actions, teachings, narratives, etc. of the master. It is an active participation in the demonstration of a community involved in bringing about the kingdom of God (*bassileia tou Theo*) on earth through the power (*dynamis*) and authority given to it to do so. It can then be said that transmission of transformative knowledge is at the very heart of the discipleship community. It is information that converts into transformation through demonstration, participation, and replication.

Historically and theologically you can see within the nine-hundred year span between Augustine and Aquinas how the theology of Christianity became in essence a treatise of philosophy. It moved from a dynamic, interactive, demonstrable, relational community to an intellectual pursuit. It was no longer a discipleship community but an



informational unit focused on the moral and ethical dilemmas of the time of its context. Miracles, signs, and wonders were limited to special events and occasions. They were limited to just a few who could meet the criteria of a philosophical transcendence achieved by removing yourself from the context which surrounded humanity at the time.

The divide was clearly drawn demarcating the differences between the have and the have not's. I want to make it clear that this is not a condemnation of the pursuit of understanding or trying to explain those things which were demonstrated, revealed and experienced in the earliest time of the Jesus movement. It is not. This is what theology is (and should be). It is the process of trying to make sense of the occurrences of the kingdom breaking in and the disciple walking in it so that the information gained can be used, transferred, and demonstrated and can become transformational.

The purpose of theology is to further the causes of discipleship not make intellectuals. The pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of information, when removed from application, results in a Cessationist, powerless, and irrelevant identity of the individual and that of the church.

Information is part of a transitional platform. It is a point of departure and not the point of arrival. Information moved to practice becomes transformational. There is a modern phrase that is used within the social services field that is most apropos to our discussion – “I cannot hear your words because your example is screaming too loud in my ears”. Theology must be able to be demonstrated. Theory must follow practice. The problem with much of Christian theology is it demonstrates its powerlessness, its inability to affect change of any substantive meaning, its ineffectual ability to set the

captives free, and its negation of miracles, signs and wonders. It limits participation in the fullness of the Gospel as taught, practiced, demonstrated, and lived in the person of Jesus plus found within the context of the documentation of scripture.

Within the context that I now participate in, the vestiges of this theology is still to be felt and dealt with. That is simply because of a lack of the true identity in which those in the context are made. They still operate under the Calvinistic identity of commerce in the Protestant Work Ethic theology. The identity is limited to what you do and how much you produce as proof of your salvation and thus your worth to the community. Roles are clearly delineated along gender stereotypes based upon what is deemed to be gender specific work definitions.

The problem with current theological thought is it is too closely tied to the concept of the fallen Adam and Eve. The current concentration is in Chapter 3 of Genesis (particularly verses 1 through 7). Chapter 2 is treated as the prolog to chapter 3; it sets the stage for the fall. Chapter 1 is limited to the idea that God created the world in a literal and limited period of time and action – nothing more or less to say about it. This places an undue emphasis on the corruption of humanity. It makes way for the Greek concept of the corruption of the flesh and the elevation of spirit born entities.

Removal of any element of humanity (body, mind, and spirit) is to make humanity less than human. It makes the ability of being fully redeemed into the *imago Dei* (image of God) a difficult task at best. God created humanity in God's image and likeness which was deemed male and female – body, mind and spirit. It was a complete package. These things were distorted in the fall not eliminated and not separated. They were equally at the effect of the fall.

The removal of any one element or the equality of any of the elements, has led the church to an identity crisis and a power shortage. It does not take into consideration the established pattern of creation as it appears in the first thirty five verses of the bible. Because of this focus, it is hard to imagine that we, as broken, sinful humans trapped within a corrupted body, mind, and spirit could ever possibly approach the level of the early disciples, apostles or saints. It makes it impossible to capture the spirit of the early church and walk in the power, signs and wonders that it flowed in and became greater than. It is because something is missing from the image. The reflection is completely distorted let alone seen dimly as Paul would have us believe. This then negates the very image of Jesus by limiting the image of humanity to brokenness only and permanently – until the *parousia*. It limits the relationship of God and humanity to one that is Deist (a god no longer active in or reactive to creation). It then places an undue emphasis on the cross and removes the movement beyond Pentecost to an actual proclamation of the good news in word and deed throughout all of creation which was, is and will be its full intent.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

In the beginning (or rather as our world was beginning – to be put together) there we were with all the possibilities before us. We were the children of promise – blank canvasses and untouched marble. As children of promise our existence was un-bridled, un-girded, and un-conformed to the societal imprints. We looked at this world from a self-centric aspect and the world served the whim of desire (if we were privileged to be a part of a wealthy society). If not, our world was a little smaller. The possibilities are fewer but the limits of our imagination have not been plumbed. Therein lays the danger. This is the place where cultures and societies try to mold us into their image and likeness to perpetuate their limiting concepts, morals, philosophy, and religious repressions.

#### **Biblical Foundation**

The immediate problem with this is that we are constantly focused upon the broken image of Adam rather than the original image of God in whom we are created. With this broken image it is difficult to even begin to imagine that we could carry out the commands of Jesus (Matthew 10:7-8; 28: 19-20, Luke 16:15), let alone proclamation of Luke 4:18 – 19/Isaiah 61:1-2. From this broken image, we cannot understand that creation, thus creativity, is the full concept of the *dynamis* of God as bestowed upon us to create and transform all of creation. We do not understand that we have been given the

authority to use the power. Add to this a rejection of the earthy Hebraic understanding of Genesis in favor of the intellectualized concentration on the fall of man, we lose the complete focus of a completed and whole creation.

It is my intention that through a close reading of the text of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3, that we can begin to fully understand the redemptive image of God as claimed and proclaimed through Jesus as the originally intended image of God.

When closely examining the text one immediately notices patterns within the chosen pericope. First there are seven major cycles of events that can be established as the seven days of the creation cycle (See Table in Appendix D). However within each major cycle there exist other events that need careful consideration. The first and second days have five sequences. The third and fourth days have nine. The fifth day has five. The sixth day has twelve. The seventh day has three. Suffice to say that each cycle and occurring sequence has significant implications

Next in the close reading of the text one sees the repeating of word(s), concepts and phrases: “God said” (ten), “Let there be” (three), “let” (nine), created/create/made/make (ten), “separate(d) (five), called (three), “be fruitful and multiple and fill” (two), “and God saw that it was good” (seven - first occurrence as light being good, last very good) , “And there was evening, and there was morning, the ... day” (six), “and so it was” (six), image (three),dome (seven), night (four), and day (four). waters (eleven), light (twelve), darkness (four). All of this can be broken down into categories of activity, activated on, and results thus having an impact upon how the pericope is viewed.

When combined all of these entities have a larger implication than a plain narrative of how the earth came to be. It is more than a stage being adequately constructed and propertied for a cast of actors to produce an anecdotal tale of the origins of the species. It has significance into the identity of the creator, and firmly establishes the roles that each element of creation is to assume.

For the purposes of the discussion in this paper, I am using the New Revised Standard Version of the text as the main text source.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup> the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.' (Genesis 1:1)

Here we have a non-specific statement of time as the opening statement. It does, however, place us somewhere at the start. The emphasis is not an exacting time table but a general placement of the sequence of events that are about to unfold. This would be in keeping with the understanding of the people of the time which the narrative would have been written to or more accurately of its oral origins.

The first line presents us with the placement of the time of the narrative and a major indication as to the personality of God. This first indication is important and needs to be dwelt upon. Our first revelation of God is as the Creator. Not only is God the Creator but we are invited to view the act of creation as it is occurring. It also makes the assumption that God did in fact exist before this act of creation. It is a glimpse of the true nature of God. This will come into significant play for the rest of this reading. God is the Creator, and one who is actively involved in the continuation of the creative act as well as with the created.

Genesis 1: 1-2 presents us with a picture that is often overlooked. First we are presented with the concept that we are at a moment (which specific one is not indicated but one in which we can understand the process) when God was creating a particular aspect of things. No hour of the day, no segment of time as indicated on the face of the clock is mentioned; no calendar alluded to – just a section of the succession and progression of something that had been going on. It would be as if we stepped into a craftsman’s shop as he is in the process of assemblage. The earth as presented in these two verses is “a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep”. From this we can logically conclude that the first step of the creation stage has been already set in motion with the presentation of the earth without order. It already exists in its entirety but as nothing that we could or would recognize it as. It is not yet what we now are familiar with as what we would call this third rock from the sun. However, the full conceptualization and purpose of this creation is as of yet to be organized. All the parts are there, all of the elements are there. All is here as was God but yet not in a tangible usable form for the creatures God would place upon it.

“Nowhere in the ancient Near East did people think of creation primarily in terms of making things. It is only our post-Enlightenment, Western way of thinking that focuses so steadfastly and exclusively on physical structure and formational history. As can be seen from the analysis of individual elements above, creation in the ancient world constituted bringing order to the cosmos from an originally chaotic or nonfunctional condition.”<sup>1</sup>

Time is not the element of concern but rather orderliness and structure of purpose, function and condition. It is not so much what was created but for what reason. The

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<sup>1</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, and David W. Baker, (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 161-162.

statement of verse one is that the heavens and earth were created but not yet given their purpose. God was still in the process of giving order and purpose to what had been created. This is illustrated in verse two in the condition of the earth during this period of the narrative and the fact that God was still active in encounter with the earth as a wind sweeping over the face of the waters.

Now as we have come to learn, the writers of other culture's creation stories all started from the same understanding.

Ancient traditions do not typically begin with nothing. Instead, they start with a condition devoid of order, function or purpose. Creation then takes place by giving things order, function and purpose, which is synonymous with giving them existence.... In Genesis 1:2 the description used is *tohu wabohu* (formless and empty). With a moment of thought it becomes obvious that this expression does not concern matter. No one suggests that this verse indicates that matter had not been shaped or that the cosmos described here is empty of matter. By logic alone the words can be seen to concern functionality, and analysis of the Hebrew confirms the conclusion that these terms indicate that the cosmos was empty of purpose, meaning and function, a place that had no order of intelligibility. Tsumura concludes that *tohu* "seems to refer to situation which lacks something abstract that should be there, such as worth, purpose, truth, profit and integrity." (Tsumura, 31) <sup>2</sup>

One of the definitions for void is being pointless, thus being ineffective or even perhaps useless. Void is totally lacking in some or all aspects. When formless is placed in front of void (formless - indicating it as shapeless and disorganized) it makes it an emphatic statement of condition. The words are double the impact when joined together. The concept presented is in flux. It is a fluid dynamic that is changing but nonetheless present. The concept has all things flowing one to the other without defining aspects. It

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 156 -157.



has no borders to separate one element from another. One of the aspects of early Hebraic culture is that when you name something you have power over it.

Generally in the ancient world the assignment of functions is connected to the giving of names. Egyptian literature identified the creator god as the one who pronounced the name of everything (Memphite Theology, line 55). In this way of thinking, things did not exist unless they were named. “It was believed that the name of a living being or an object was not just a simple or practical designation to facilitate the exchange of ideas between person but that it was the very essence of what was defined, and that the actual pronouncing of a name was to create what was spoken” (Plumley, 38).

In Genesis, God initiates the creative act with a spoken word and finalizes the act with the giving of a name. In this way the members of creation are brought in to functional existence.<sup>3</sup>

At this point nothing has been named other than the generality of the heavens and earth. So placing the two words together indicates that the earth at its inception was a shapeless and disorganized useless entity not ready yet and at this point not suitable for its intended purpose. The *Geneva Bible* calls this a disordered mass maintained by the power of God.

At this point in the narrative, in the modern vernacular we have already joined the program in progress. The earth exists not in a form that we can readily relate to or comprehend. It was there, named but not organized or ordered. It was conceptual (conceptual here being a broad abstract idea or a guiding general principle). At what time it existed is not clearly presented. We can see that God was at work as God had put into action “a wind” that enveloped it thus giving it the beginnings of its boundaries. God in God’s infinity had bound it together.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 158.

Wind in this case has been translated in other ways but the most significant is from the Hebrew רוּחַ *ruwach* {roo'-akh} meaning - wind, breath, mind, spirit. It is most commonly translated as Spirit in reference to God. Thus the Spirit of God was responsible for containing it. For how long or when it began is not mentioned. There is no indication of human time points – no third hour of the first day inference, noon, 5:30 p.m. or any other such reference. The only thing is that God was in the process of creating and the earth was conceptually a reality in no particular definable form but there. We are at the doorway of phase one – the organization of the physical properties of the earth.

....it is rightly pointed out that all the other OT uses of *ruah elohim* are most naturally translated “spirit of God” rather than “supernatural wind”. The motif of the wind in chaos scenes is well-recognized both in the ancient Near East and in the Bible... An additional close study of the Israelite conception of the Spirit of the Lord and the meaning of the word translated “hover” leads us to summarize the Genesis description of the primal condition in the following paraphrase: “The earth was nonfunctional; chaos reigned in primordial, watery darkness and a supernatural wind that was endowed with the power of God circulated about the surface of the waters.”<sup>4</sup>

The first act of the organization of physical properties begins with verse 3 with the shift of time indicated by the sequence marker - then – indicating a change of action. We are at the point where the action begins for our purposes of understanding.

<sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

God at this point had caused something to happen – to shift from a formless void with darkness covering its depth to one that had light.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 157-158.

In Genesis the light also relieves the darkness, but it serves its purpose in the context of time, which is seen as the alternation between periods of light and periods of darkness.”<sup>5</sup>

How God accomplished this is not given other than saying that “He said” - וַיֹּאמֶר particle conjunction אמר verb qal waw consec imperfect 3rd person masculine singular **B622 אמר vb. utter, say -- Qal 1.** Say; the person addressed usu. introduced by אל, or ל; rarer combinations are; where ב local; in all cases usually sq. dir. obj. of words said. The obj. spoken of may be referred to by אל, or ל, very rarely by a simple accus., except after אָשֶׁר where the words used follow (cf. אָשֶׁר 4 d). **2.** Say in the heart (= think) בלִבִּי א; in particular = *desire*; sq. inf. = *purpose*. **3.** Promise (sq. inf.); *id.* + ל of person); (sq. acc. of dir. obj. + ל of pers. + inf. of purpose). **4.** Command (esp. late) sq. אל of person addressed; inf. + ל of pers.; sq. acc. dir. obj.; sq. cl. with אָשֶׁר = *that*; sq. cl. with כִּי. **Niph.** *be said, told* (all abs., indef. subj., of current saying); so *said* in a book; *be related, told*, of vision; *said, told* to (sq. ל " either so, or *told concerning*; hence *be called*. **Hiph.** *avow, avouch.* **Hithp.** *act proudly, boast.* (pg 55)<sup>6</sup>

In other words we are given the action that set things into motion but we are not given the transitional organization process. He simply spoke it and it was accomplished. “The creative spoken word of God in Genesis is not just activating a potentiality. It is an act of “making into” rather than of “bringing out of”.<sup>7</sup>

The how of accomplishment was not given. The important thing to understand here is that we are witness to the action of accomplishment. The process is not the focal point of the narrative but rather an indication that there are other things to occur.

Why He did it was not discussed other than He was in the process of creating. No source of light was discussed simply that God had separated it from the darkness. It must be mentioned that this was before the sun or the moon was created and therefore not a

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>6</sup> BibleWorks 2001 WTM Release 3.5. This Westminster Hebrew Old Testament, 1992-2002

<sup>7</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 158.

part of the process. It was a calling out into being for examination. The start of the action is not limited to a precise moment but vaguely eluded to as part of the sequence of God creating.

The darkness חֹשֶׁךְ (*hōshek*) darkness. is not defined here. It is not suggested as to what it might be other than an enveloping condition. Darkness at this point may indicate an obscurity – something that is seen but not understood, compiled but yet unobservable, collected but not organized. Throughout the bible the understanding of pulling something into the light means that you make it known, understood, observable and categorized. In this understanding we know that it is for our benefit. In all of the examples within the context of the text, God, in fact, already knows. It is our belief that we can hide something within the darkness but the truth of God illuminates it all. Nothing is hidden from God.

Light then in this context takes on the property of pulling something from obscurity into the realm of becoming obvious to us. It then pulls it into the realm of knowable things. God already knew what was there but separates into a form that we can understand. The physical properties were not discussed. Precise measurements were not given. The source of the light was not discussed nor the time needed to separate it out from the darkness. Simply God said it and it was done.

When God saw this come into the organizational structure, God determined that it was properly placed in sequence. God separated the light from the darkness – thus removed it and placed it. This is further endorsed in v5 by God naming the sequence as Day with which the light defined it and Night by which it was defined by the darkness. Notice there are no means of measurement other than that defined by God. That

measurement is in God's definition not ours. God at the end of the sequence gives it parameters (borders) to contain it, restrain it and define it – for our benefit. The sequence starts with the creation of the object identified, accomplished and then placed within its permanent border – the day.

We also have to make the point of the ancients' conception of what God was doing speaking these things into existence.

<sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. (Genesis 1:4-5) (Genesis 1:4-5)

So from the outset time sequence or detailed accounting was not part of the narration other than a space for the beginning and end of the sequence. The speculative conclusion would thus be that it played no significant importance to the outcome of events to come. The narration was now in focus as a sequenced but not a detailed accounting of time factors. This then releases us to look at the entire process as a flowing piece of creative ordering. This will be important later to our understanding of the creative process for the artist.

This is speculative but it is a point to be considered. It would logically make sense that God would be able to accomplish this in the immediate. God truly does not need a sequenced order of events to produce the end result. For God it can be done all at once, however, this is not the purpose of the narrative. The purpose of the narrative is to place it within a sequenced order that we can understand, comprehend and ultimately use for our benefit. God needs no such constraints. God placed it for our understanding.

The time element is an anchoring reference, a point to which we can join in the understanding of the narrative. Remove those elements and the story still stands. That is an important factor. The time reference of a day plays no significant factor when removed from the story. The concept of passing time is carried through as sequenced and orderly sets of observable events. The story is not added to by precise time or overly influenced by its absence. The comprehension is enhanced but not to a degree that would make it an essential point to the narration. It is necessary for our comprehension of an ordered occurrence in linear space which is our realm. God is doing this outside of time to affect/effect the things of time.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup> So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the dome sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. (Genesis 1:6-8)

It seems a small point but notice that the act precedes the time reference. There almost seems to be a separation. God speaks, the action occurs but there is no time reference until after the act of creation is completed. Then and only then is the sequence defined as a particular reference of time – the second day. The act is defined by surrounding it with a place – something that we recognize as a day. That day did not exist until God sequenced it. The second day did not exist until God placed it and named it. God is the one who defines the sequence and then places it within our understanding. God created before the time sequence.

Now that we are free to look at the sequence of events rather than its precise time the story takes on a different character. You can see the movement of creation in a process that goes from a large picture or conceptualization to an orderly progression of

delineating areas to an assignment of purpose. We start with the first occurrence in the sequence of removing a source of illumination from within the entirety of the concept to begin the process.

This source of illumination/light is not defined nor exactly what that source was. Going to a dictionary (Webster's Dictionary) you get several meanings of the word light. The fifth definition is listed as a source of spiritual illumination and the sixth is public knowledge.

Here one might suggest something that is not directly supported by the text in immediate context. It is suggested by the context of how light is used throughout biblical text. Merging the two definitions of light together we may get a sense of what light is to mean. It could be construed as the point at which God makes evident through revelation what He is doing. He brings it out of this mass and places it for all to see and thus become aware of.

To place it within human conceptualization is to diminish it but; it is necessary for some point of understanding. The creative aspect of any human process takes place within the interior dark and hidden places of the human mind. It is not shared and it does not have an existence of itself. It is not ordered nor is it a part of common reality. It has no purpose as of yet. However, once it has been spoken of, written down, shared or allowed to seen; it can be ordered and placed within its proper position, place and purpose. It is activated to have power and to be power.

In Hebrew אור *'owr {ore}* stands for the light but also means the light of instruction. Instruction is order – a statement of what must be done with authority or as an order. Instruction is a command. God commanded it – spoke it into existence. What I

am trying to point out is that the entire concept is being brought out into an atmosphere where it can be readily seen. Once something can be seen it can be understood because it can be examined. Again this plays an important part in understanding human creativity.

Another prominent metaphorical usage relates light to instruction. When a man finds wisdom, his face lights up (Eccl 8:1). The teaching of one's parents (Prov 6:23) as well as the word of God are a lamp to one's feet, a light to one's path (Psa 119:105, 130). In Psalm 19, which compares the written Scriptures to nature and to the sun in particular, the commandments of the Lord are said to enlighten the eyes (v. 8 [H 9]). Most likely the challenge to Israel "to walk in the light of the Lord" denotes adherence to the laws and teachings of God (Isa 2:3, 5; cf. Isa 51:4). In a word, whereas darkness is associated with death (Job 3:5; Job 10:21; Psa 88:6; Psa 91:6), failure and suffering (Jer 28:12; Amos 5:18, 20; Lam 3:2), folly (Job 37:19; Job 38:2; Eccl 2:13), and sin (Job 24:16; Psa 74:20, Prov 2:13; Jer 49:9), light is associated with life (Mal 3 [H 4.2]), salvation and prosperity (Job 29:3; Isa 58:8; Psa 36:10 [H 9]), wisdom (Psa 19:9 [H 8]; Psa 119:105, 130; Prov 6:23; Dan 5:11), justice (Isa 42:1-3, 6; Isa 49:6; Isa 51:4; Mic 7:8).

The ultimate development is to compare God himself with light. The Lord is my light and my salvation (Psa 27:1), though a flaming fire to purge out wickedness (Isa 10:17). Isaiah describes the Messiah as a great light shining in a land of deep darkness (Isa 9:2 [H 1]). He will be "a light to the nations" so that God's salvation may reach the ends of the earth (Isa 42:6; Isa 49:6).<sup>8</sup>

In any creative endeavor we start with the concept – the need, desire to do. Then the point becomes what is it that you do or simply what is it that you want to create. You start with the larger concept of I want to draw, to paint, to compose, to cook, to diagram, to formulate or any one of millions of expressions of the creative aspect of our existence. From there we further define the modality of what it is we wish to do – the subject matter. Once the subject matter is decided upon we go about deciding how to put it

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<sup>8</sup> BibleWorks 2001 WTM Release 3.5. This Westminster Hebrew Old Testament, 1992-2002



together. Then we go about performing those actions necessary to place those items in order so that the concept comes to full realization.

These are the important first steps in creating the environment where things can be placed upon the canvas of existence. Here is where the background story is being produced. The scene is being set for the narrative to take place. We are seeing a larger picture developed into sections of existence.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:9-10)

The ancient societies had similar concepts of creation – what we would call the universe – in terms of a limitless ocean that wasn't yet divided, a primordial soup. Most of the societies of that time had some form of this concept. In researching mythologies, especially in the Greek, Roman and Babylonian, you will find the common theme of bodies of water emerging/emanating from the body of a god. The usual methodology was to divide the body of a god through a violent action by another deity. You can readily find this type of mythology within the Babylonian creation epic, *Gilgamesh* and the *Enuma Elish*. The Babylonian god Marduk leads the gods in a battle against Tiamat. When Tiamet is slain, her body is opened and water flows out of various orifices and the remains of her body become the mountains from which water flows. From her eyes it is reported that the Tigris and the Euphrates flow.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Matt Wiebe, "Creation Myths of the Ancient World," page 431, *Religion and Nature*, accessed April 17, 2013, <http://www.religionandnature.com/ern/sample/Fiala--CreationMythsAncientWorld.pdf>.

Ancient Hebrew society did not carry such a notion. They believed that it was God working upon something that was outside of God. God was not God's creation. God's identity was not dependent upon it as had the other cultural gods. From the concept of the Genesis narrative you could say that it was the environment being further defined and refined. Notice the generalization. No specifics are given as far as organization. Everything is given in general terms and in larger categories. The details are absent. These are things to be experienced later. We are working from a larger proportion to the smaller details.

When one creates a painting one blocks in large portions of area to define where things are to be. Detail is left out yet one gives them the beginnings of borders so that they can be placed and detailed according to their purpose and where they are in relationship to other elements and light. This again is a key concept to the overall production of the completed project. Is it necessary to add every detail to the painting to make it understandable? The answer is a definite no. The key to a good painting or story is as much what one leaves out as it is how much one puts in. One alludes to the subject matter with broad strokes. The painter does not need to detail the entirety of the trunk of a tree to know that it is under all of the leaves of the tree. The artist reveals portions of it to hint at the structure. The mind fills in the rest. The detail is the responsibility of the observer. It is not the single element that needs to be revealed but the total concept and purpose.

At this point I defer to Francis A. Schaeffer. In his book, *"The God Who Is There"*, Schaeffer makes a point that every detail and aspect of creation is not needed for us to fully understand the story. Part of the responsibility for the discovery of the total

narration rests upon us. As such God does not communicate all things to us. We who are created in the image and likeness of God are intended to explore and discover the things of creation – the thumb print of God. God provides us with a basic knowledge but not a complete knowledge. This is the purpose of scripture – a hint. The ultimate truth then is in the relationship with God.<sup>10</sup> As it is with any great painting, the information alluded to is for us to discover and place as it was for the artist to hint at it.

At the same time one must avoid the opposite mistake of saying that because God has communicated truly concerning science, all scientific study is wasted. This is a false deduction. To say that God communicates *truly* does not mean that God communicates *exhaustively*. Even in our human relationships we never have exhaustive communication, though what we do have may be true. Thus, as far as our position in the universe is concerned, though the infinite God has said true things concerning the whole of what he has made, our knowledge is not thereby meant to be static. Created in His image, we are rational and, as such, we are able to, and intended to, explore and discover further truth concerning creation.” “God says, in effect, ‘Learn of the truth that I have made in the external world’. Finite man in the external universe, being finite, has no sufficient reference point if he begins absolutely and autonomously from himself; he needs *certain knowledge*. God gives us this in the Scriptures. With this in mind the scientist can understand, in their ultimate relationships, the truths that he is looking at. Thus scientific study in itself can be to the glory of God, for here man is functioning properly in the universe in which God has placed him. He is telling us what is truly there, and he is adding to the store of knowledge of his fellowmen.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 120-121.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

This then further releases us to search within the expanse of God's creation for further understanding as to who God is. God has placed within God's creation markers that point the way to God, for us to wonder, ponder and examine. God does this as a way of deepening our relationship with God. It is an invitation of pursuit.

So as we journey together in scripture, we are commanded to look for the truth that supports and undergirds the entirety of scripture and God's creation. The truth is in scripture and in the world – exactly in the whole of creation. One will not contradict the other because they are of God. It is where we have interfered that there is confusion. God, through His continual relationship to and with creation and in our redemption and empowerment, creation will be placed back in order. It is our duty then to go forth and seek the totality of truth contained in the narrative as made evident in creation, in our relationship with God, others, in scripture and God's word spoken to us directly.

<sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. (Genesis 1: 11–13)

Here is a pivotal point where the act is no longer just separation but the instruction that the earth shall put forth – it is a releasing, an allowing to produce – the giving of the power to produce from its own resources. This is a shift from the work of just the Creator. God gives it full permission to go and do what it needs to do. It is empowered with the power – the *dyunamus* of God - to fulfill its purpose.

Once having created the stage upon which humanity will stand, God then adds those elements that will sustain the populations of creation (humanity and animals). This careful layering of elements in logical order shows the interconnectivity of the whole of creation. No one element is sustainable unto itself. All elements must be in place in order and in balance. They function as a whole to further create an environment of mutual sustainability. This then further supports the conceptualization of the ebb and flow of creation. It is a dynamic and not a static entity. It moves, springs forth to support the next and when all is in place it will become a cyclical process.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights-- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night-- and the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. (Genesis 1: 14-19)

Here is where the controversy could begin as far as the conceptualization of the human time element. This is where human timing begins – the place of comprehensible measure of space and time. My opinion is that before this we were dealing in God’s time which is the incomprehensible concept of the eternal to humanity. Our finite minds can not understand, grasp or function in an atmosphere that has no start or end. The narrative fastens intervals for our comprehension not for God’s limitation. Can God create within the space of our limited time reference? Without a doubt otherwise God would not be God. But the question is why are we limiting Him to the finite? Again I call to the sequence of events. The act of creation occurs first, God declares it good and then “there was evening and there was morning”.

The way of understanding the day is different from ours in that the day begins with the evening. The setting of the sun begins the day and does not conclude it as it does in ours. The sequence of the events dictates the order of events. If you are a literalist then you must conclude by reason of order that the action takes place outside of the boundaries of time. Then the act within itself is timeless – then placed with in time sequence.

The word signs here have significance. It is not used exclusively as a marker of time but:

Signs function theologically in the OT as indicators used by God to convey knowledge and through which he reveals himself. They can be used for warning, motivation and authentication. Eclipses would be one of the examples of the heavenly bodies being used for signs. This is not a mechanical function but a theological one.<sup>12</sup>

So it is not limited to a pulse of the clock.

The story of creation is an orderly, harmonious assemblage of God's plan. Here God places into being the condition necessary for marking the flow and expanse of existence in measurable and understandable fractions for placement of man. Time is marked and managed by the ebb and flow of creation itself – not through mechanization. Human time is best measured not by the dot on the face of a clock but by the face of the stage upon which he stands. Humanity's time clock (biologic and cosmic) is built into the movement of the planets, the stars and the seasons. The movement of these heavenly bodies in regular flowing and measurable paths allow for the demarcation of events as they tie into the larger picture of creation. This creates the elements that make it possible

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<sup>12</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2003), 159.

to place the narrative in linear order and give creation a measure for placement in existence. The time element is not exacting but flows. Here is the beginning of the ability to tell human time. Before this was strictly God's timing in God's measure – eternal. Our time, the finite, is measured in the passing of the finite items.

There is one more indication of what seasons mean. To the Hebrew its meaning goes beyond the concept of spring, summer, fall and winter.

Vogels has demonstrated, however, that throughout the Pentateuch as well as in most other contexts, the (seasons) are not seasons such as summer and winter but the festivals and religious feast days of the liturgical calendar (Vogels, 163-66) Again, this is not a mechanical function but a socio-religious one.<sup>13</sup>

So, conceptually these markers are for points that God wishes us to measure life by, not just moments of human convenience.

<sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. (Genesis 1:20-23)

Once all the elements of the stage were set, the creation of the players takes place. Just a side note the water element here has two meanings. To our modern inference the water element is the liquid element only. To the ancient reference the water element is those things that flow, thus air is as fluid as water. This would then be the reason for the birds of the air and the fish of the sea being a part of the same grouping. Also note that it

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 159.

is from these waters that the creation is separated. The speaking caused the elements to bring forth. God further separates the elements of creation one from the other.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:24-25)

Here is where the narrative takes a turn, a separation from the separation. Here is where the main players are to take the stage. The beginning of the play is about to begin for the characters are to be introduced. It is a calling forth from the creation stage itself – the earth bringing forth.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26)

Notice to this point there is no assignment of responsibility previous to this. To this point it is just one thing flowing into another. There was no delineation of importance or assignment. But at this point something happens in the order of creation. God creates something that directly reflects aspects and attributes of God. Made in the image which is someone who closely resembles the creator but is not the creator to the point where assignment of responsibility for its care is given directly to the creation. Dominion is the ability to control or have a sphere of influence over a particular area of concern. It is a land that is to be governed over.

Image is a word we must look at carefully. The Hebrew word is תְּצַלֵּם (*tselem*) meaning: *an image* and its usage is: form(1), image (5), images(6), likenesses(3), phantom(m)(1) as indicated in the *New American Standard Bible*. In the *King James*



*Version tselem {tseh'-lem}* has its meaning as : 1) image 1a) images (of *tumours*, mice, heathen gods) 1b) image, likeness (of resemblance) 1c) mere, empty, image, semblance.

The *Geneva Bible* uses this explanation of Genesis 1:26 that God previously commanded the water and the earth to bring forth other parts of creation, however with man it is another way. “(1) God commanded the water and the earth to bring forth other creatures: but of man he says, "Let us make..." signifying that God takes counsel with his wisdom and virtue purposing to make an excellent work above all the rest of his creation.” God takes on the counsel of God’s wisdom and virtue in the proposition of humanity’s creation placing it in another category. “(2) This image and likeness of God in man is expounded in Eph 4:24 where it is written that man was created after God in righteousness and true holiness meaning by these two words, all perfection, as wisdom, truth, innocence, power, etc.”

In the *New Revised Standard Bible* Ephesians 4:24 reads “and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” This understanding of the image of man will be important in further discussion of the artist/creative purpose of humanity. For now it is important in our understanding that humanity’s assignment is to be representational. What I mean by this is that we in our creation and by God decree act in the world in God’s stead. We are given the power and the authority to operate within God’s creation, to shape and mold it so that it fits the ultimate purpose of God’s design.

It is reemphasized with the phrase according to our likeness. Likeness is a representation having similarities. In this the concept is clearly demonstrated that mankind/humanity/humankind is placed in creation as caretaker, servant to God to serve

as caretaker of earthly creation. God created the complete stage with a host of characters in an exact order and then specifically created a main set of characters to act as a governor in God's stead assigned to taking care of all of created creatures, acting as one who has been given the authority to do so.

The word likeness in the Hebrew דְּמוּת *demuwth* {*dem-ooth*'} has the meaning of: n f 1) likeness, similitude adv 2) in the likeness of, like as. So we have an important factor being called to our attention through emphasis of meanings.

Image and likeness are amplifications of one another. The concept of image and likeness are very important to all of humanity. The very first thing we learn of God is that God is a creative God. God is the Creator. We have no other attributes listed; we have no other description or qualifications than first that God is indeed the creator and is creative. Therefore, as one who is created in the image and likeness of God, it is a natural aspect and attribute of that created being in the image and likeness of God to be creative. Creative's meaning here is not in the exact same way as God the Creator but creative as one who is representational or an imitator of the Creator. I will fully explain this later but again keep this to the forefront of what you are reading.

<sup>27</sup> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:27-28)

Again here is the emphasis of humankind being made in the image of God by saying it twice. Not only was it written twice but the distinction of male and female is that one is not given superiority over the other. God blessed both entities equally, given both complete capability to have dominion over the occupants of the creative stage. This was the order of things.

The unique relationship of humans to God is captured by the deliberately ambiguous phrase ‘the image of God’. The reason for the choice of these words lies in the uniform Old testament abhorrence of the representation of God in any form. This phrase raises humans above the rest of creation by placing them alongside God. The term *saalem* ‘image’ is explained more precisely by *demut* ‘similarity’ (1:26). The two words together mean ‘according to a similar but not identical representation’. This description is to be distinguished from the ancient near eastern tradition in which a deity formed humanity in divine shape.

Yet we need to avoid connecting the ‘image’ too exclusively to the ‘spiritual’ side or moral capacity of mankind. The point of these terms is far more functional than conceptual. It touches what the likeness entails rather than its precise nature. The likeness is dynamic in that human being (*‘adam*) become God’s representatives on earth. They have the natural right to explore, subdue, and partake of the creation as the words ‘let them have dominion over...’ convey. Being in God’s image, man and women are to rule the world in God’s name.<sup>14</sup>

Here is the Hebrew lexical definition of fruitful. פָּרָה *parah* {paw-raw'} that has the meaning: 1) to bear fruit, be fruitful, branch off 1a) (Qal) to bear fruit, be fruitful 1b) (Hiphil) 1b1) to cause to bear fruit 1b2) to make fruitful 1b3) to show fruitfulness, bear fruit

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<sup>14</sup> LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush. eds. *Old Testament Survey – The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition., (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 23-24

Fruitful in the English interpretation has multiple meanings of the ability to bear fruit in abundance, producing many offspring, causing or promoting fertility or productivity or creative being highly productive or creative producing useful results or benefits. (This can be seen in the Webster's Dictionary) Here again is an aspect that is seldom discussed – the creative birthright through blessing.

Another key word here is subdue. Subdue is the act of bringing it under control, to restrain, discipline and tame. It is left up to the humanity to continue creation by having it abide by the borders that Creator has been placed in. It is permission to be creative in its use. It also implies to use it to its potential. Notice it does not say dominate, lord it over, beat into submission, abuse, plunder but rather to act as an agent of the one who created it all. This to make sure that it stays within the confines of its existence and purpose for which it was designed and in doing so, making sure that all was functioning.

Here is where the creative engine has its beginnings; made in the image, given dominion and contained within the blessing, Given the power and the authority to act upon it.

<sup>29</sup> God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:29-31)

Having completed the task of ordering and placing within the confines of that ordered existence God declares it done to the point where it is not only good but very good. However it does not state that it was completed. The world was very good but not

in fact or in context perfect. Perfect at this point meaning completed. It was placed in the hands of those – who because they were made in the image and likeness of its Creator – have been given permission to make it or bring it into its full potential

All was in balance. All was as it should be and placed within the hands of those by whose image they were made. At which point the scripture continues with this final proclamation.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:1)

The heavens and earth were finished as in being brought to the place where they were given their purpose. However, notice the final phrase – because God rested from all the work that He had done in creation. This is an open ended statement. The craftsman was done with the work that he would do, but leaves it in the hands of those whom he is training to ready the work for its completion. We were given the world in correct, systematically ordered and complete form so that we – as representatives of the Divine Order may continue the creative exploration and expansion to the glory and purpose of God.

This is the prelude/prolog to what will be explained next in scripture. It is catching you up to where the character development of the narration takes place. To this point you only catch a glimpse of what God has done so that humanity can be placed in the narration. This is the story in front of the screen. Humanity is not created in a vacuum

but carefully placed within a sustainable environment where humanity's interaction with and to the rest of creation is perfected – completed in the sense that it had been given its purpose. Humanity then can be placed on the stage with an understanding of humanity's purpose and place laid out in front for all to plainly see.

Here is where you find the purpose of creative and artistic expression. It is firmly rooted within two factors – the primary attribute we first learn of God is that God is the Creator and we are made in God's image and likeness. Based upon these two irrefutable factors, the logical conclusion is that we are creative. These drives are the life breathed birth right of humanity.

But this is not the only postulation that can come from reading the text and deciphering its meaning. As we have closely read the text there are patterns that appear and must be discussed.

Besides the seven day patterning, there are other patterns to discover that will lead to substantive meaning. There are thirteen permissive commands which in some form use the words “let there be” (v3, v6, v9 – 2x, v11, v14, v15, v20 -2x, v24, v26 – 3x). These permissive commandments give to each section of the revelatory nature of this narrative, the ability, authority and power to perform its assigned purpose. God then establishes a boundary of operation in which these entities function.

However verse 26 does not point the permissive command to creation but rather to God. Let there be turns decidedly to let us. “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness”. The indication is that the command is self-directed and it is a command that establishes the pattern for that creation. The implication is that humanity is to be made in the image (an imitation) of the God head that would perform its purpose

and function as the likeness (representation/representative) of God. This is the establishment what would become the Imago Dei that would play itself out throughout biblical passages until you reach the redemptive, regenerative, and reconciling acts of Jesus. The statement that Jesus makes in that when you see him you are in fact seeing the Father is the reclamation of the image of God in whom all humanity was made and empowered in.

It is the reordering of the broken image of Adam to the full image of God. It is the reality of the parable of the prodigal son. The original design of humanity was to have the authority to act and be empowered by God to be fruitful, multiplying the image of God throughout creation, bringing creation into submission of God's purpose and having the ability to rule - not in the same sense that God ultimately rules – but in the sense that humanity takes control and develops them according to the purposes of God. God has given humanity the authority to act in God's stead. Humanity is to be an imitator of God. God empowered. God blessed.

After this close reading of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3, we can begin to have an understanding that we, being made in the image and likeness of God, have been given authority and power to carry out the plans and purposes of God the Creator. This image was broken through the fall but redeemed through the preaching, teaching, demonstration of signs and wonders, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The final act of reclamation of the image of God in fullness was with the final act of Pentecost as the re-empowerment of the redeemed image of God in humanity. This was the plan from the outset of creation to

have a fully authoritative and empowered humanity. This redemption of the image of God is so that we can fulfill our destiny as seen in the life of Christ as testified especially in the texts of the evangelist John. (John 5:19, 8:38, 17:6-24)

### **Historical**

History is a chronicling of societal elements along a time line of developmental influences be they traumatic, incremental, intellectual, spiritual and/or physical. Theology is a part of that process in as much as it is a reactionary process to historical influences. Theology is reactionary in that it is an effort to explain historical God induced occurrences. It is in a sense a part of an historical study of the interaction and relation of a people and god(s).

The danger can be and often is that theology is composed in a vacuum of intellectualism devoid of experiential knowledge – thus from a third person vantage and not a first person observational, participatory vantage. It is often taught not in the ancient way of imitation but in separation in a clinical/academic paradigm.

In the assessment of early Christian communities, we can use the modality of concentric circles that is often found when dealing with individuals as spheres of influence and personal space. You have the spheres of Greek, Roman and Jewish communities (inclusive of the diaspora). The initial and major influence was that of the Jewish world that surrounded them. The Jewish world at that time was at the effect of the Greco-Roman world that surrounded them, ruled them, and influenced their thought and ethos.

You can also look for clues in artistic developments – architecture, music, fine art – act as a precursor, qualifier, for sociological developments. Putting it simply you can



tell that something is about to happen in a society in observing the artist communities.

These movements become an historical marker for social change. Looking at the fringe elements will give you a sense of what is about to happen in the major sectors of society.

The Chinese were adept at this. They in fact sought to control the artistic elements of society to insure stability. They would not allow shifts in artistic style because they knew and saw this as a main indicator of change – and not necessarily a change that they would welcome. They knew if these elements began to change – dynasties would soon fall and did.

Christianity in fact was a messianic sect of Judaism. What is meant by sect is that it was a deviant movement within a well-defined religiously centered culture. The early Christian movement understood itself within those exact terms. At the epicenter of the Christian communities beliefs were those not shared by the majority of other groupings of Jews. These were the defining elements of whom and what Christianity was and that it could not be defined by the temple practice, the exclusive lineage of the priesthood or the rabbinic *halakhah* interpretations of scripture.

Christianity could then hold the traditions, interpretive procedures and institutions of Israel. However it would do so in a fashion that would become at times radically (meaning at its root) different.<sup>15</sup> These were the beginning roots of the movement but were not necessarily the outcome of what they were yet to be. Thus it is with the concept of the Messianic message of the restored image of God as revealed in Genesis 1:1 through 2:3.

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<sup>15</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christian*, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1986), 97-99.

The traditions of the earliest Christians can be seen as preserved in the Synoptic Gospels. Their accounts of Jesus and his immediate followers show them going throughout the countryside preaching the kingdom of God is at hand, performing miracles, healing and exorcisms.<sup>16</sup> Some of the sayings of Jesus could be misconstrued as a commandment to an ascetic lifestyle as witnessed in Mark 6 :8-11.<sup>17</sup> This penchant for asceticism reached it height in movements originating during the second century in the areas of Syria and Egypt.<sup>18</sup>

The question here then is what has this to do with the image of God? It has to do with the fracturing of the complete image of God in that it is a retiring from the whole of creation to await an eschatological event. It is not an engagement but a retreat. It is an escape from bringing the kingdom of God into complete fruition as instructed in the Genesis 1:1 through 2:3 accounts. It is an abandonment to await the final outcome in condemnation of society rather than redemption of the original authority and empowerment of all of creation. It is a denial of the creativity – the ability to change and implement the original boundaries of permissive commandments given to the first of humanity by God.

This withdrawal from the world to await an eschatological occurrence flies in the face of the permissive commandments of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. The command to be fruitful, multiply, subdue and have dominion over has given way to a retreat from the world. Once cut off from normative existence, it was easier to incorporate concepts of

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 108.

pursuit of and preparation for a spiritual life that was then viewed as the better way to obtain spiritual enlightenment. This abandonment of the physical negates the full image of God in whom man was first created and to whom humanity was redeemed to be. It is a compilation of body, mind and spirit that God called good, in fact very good, that humanity is called to be.

This is the beginning of the adaptation of a cross centric, continually sinful, broken image of man when you divide, categorize, and rate the aspects of humanity. With any aspect left out or rated as undesirable, you destabilize and minimize the authoritative power structure of the individual. A house divided against itself cannot stand and must subsequently fall. No authority or position of authority and power can be internally accepted. The broken image and acceptance of the broken image becomes normative. As such, to borrow from the architectural terminology of Mr. Sullivan of the late 1800's – form must follow function. If the function is disrupted, corrupted, or in any way compromised, the form that follows must also.

Through this new modality, the restored image of God as modeled by Jesus, authorized by Jesus to his disciples in power can be easily usurped by the incorporation of other philosophies and religious concepts of the brokenness of the physical individual and the superiority of the spiritual. Acceptance of mortification of the flesh, suffering, and future focusing can and will become the modality for future normative Christian communities. This is completely antithetical to the original script of creation in the here, now, and later kingdom of God to one of deferred to future events.

If you view a sociological movement you will notice that it has three distinct patterns of evolutionary activity. It moves from innovation (filling a present need),

replication (repeating itself to serve better) and then preservation (ensuring the movement will continue to exist). Eventually the sociological movement will serve only itself and its own motives. This is something that Jesus found fault with the temple. It became an instrument for its own perpetuation rather than a training ground of service to God and all of God's creation. It became a series of prohibitive laws that separated the people from God rather than calling all people to God. Christianity was quickly moving away from its communal/relational roots and fast becoming a hierarchal system. Christianity moved away from and severed itself from the Judaic roots. As a group removes itself from another, it is often noted that the group eventually looks like the very thing that they removed themselves from.

The adaptation and recycling of Jewish and pagan moral instruction became evident in Christian teaching with the advent of the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Greek rhetoric and philosophy found its way into the teachings and patterns of teaching in early Christian literature and practice. As Christianity moved toward the third and fourth centuries, the Alexandrian scholars Clement and Origen were more than willing to write in the style of self-confident Roman authors flaunting their academic credentials.<sup>19</sup> Origen, Jerome, and Aphrahat continued to seek out and learn from Jewish teachers however Christianity was to be formed by things other than rabbinic academics.<sup>20</sup>

The first generation of Christians lived in a dualistic world. The first is of the commonplace day to day existence which consisted of friends, neighbors and the realities of day to day existence. There was also the new creating and caring world of the crucified

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 119.

Messiah who was raised from the dead. With them there are pockets of believers, male and female all considered being children of God who practiced powerful rituals, experienced high emotions, trance like states and encounters with the Spirit.<sup>21</sup> This would eventually lead to a further fracturing of the redeemed image of God to the broken image of Adam.

The third century proved to be a major turning point in the church when Constantine legalized the church. This was a double edged sword. The first edge was that the church could develop without the threat of persecution. However with the legitimacy came an imposed structure. The concept was the incorporation into a governmental structure – an imposed hierarchy

#### Synagogue – House Church - Worship Model

Conceptually this was a two day event that kept the Hebraic code of Sabbath behavior of worship and then extended it into the experiential in the gathering in what was to become the love feast. Each space was designed for specific elements and purposes of community – worship, instruction, initiation and practice. Both of these architectural elements have design elements that reflect the function and purpose of the buildings. The form followed the function. These elements influence how and what is done in them and are perceived by the individual and the society. At this point Christianity was a symbiotic organism with its roots and purposes deep within the Hebraic custom and practices. It had no other laws than what were already in place. It

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 162.

was adaptable. One building was an extension of the other. It was a cyclical process of societal interaction in the form of a public gathering within a public building for the purposes of identification within a religious rite to private intimate space of experiential practice and instruction.

The design of the public space in the temple was specific to an entering in process to arrive at a point of worship. It had limited access areas that represented hierarchical, authority and societal divisions. It had outer and inner courts that separated those who were deemed whole from those who did not meet the criteria. It separated male from female. It separated things of the spiritual to things of the physical. It was a system of task performance to achieve an outcome. It separated God from the people. Its' structure was representational of the societal system it functioned in. It was stratified. It was government approved and ratified. It was an external system of laws that no one could obtain or keep. It was open twenty-four hours, seven days a week, and three-hundred sixty-five days a year.

The private space of the house church was a function of family design that allowed for free association within groupings with limited space differentiation that could and was adapted to an additional processes and needs. It was interactive. Form follows function in that they both exemplify the particular needs of a grouping of people within their circle of interaction. Both had overlapping spheres with the other. It was an interactive experiential atmosphere which allowed for demonstration and empowering of the individual and group. It was instructional to the point of duplication. It was not

government approved and ratified but it was God ordained and initiated. It was an internal system that one passed on. It was also open twenty-four hours, seven days a week, and three-hundred sixty-five days.

This two day system however could not continue because of its oppositional dynamic of one with strict boundaries and the other with boundary functionality. The theologies could not occupy the same space. One was firmly based upon the rule of law, and the other on the rule of love.

The Hebraic was based upon the *halakhah* (literally the way to go) – a system of hierarchy of interpretation of the law as presented in scripture alone that even recused God from the interpretive process. God having given man scripture would be said to have relinquished God's authority to interpret that scripture. God would have been said to give the authority of interpretation to those in the priesthood who searched and scanned the scriptures for their meaning. It was a community to insure its own survival in traditions and practice. It took its identity from the broken Adam. It looked for a political solution to a spiritual problem.

The Christian system was written upon the heart of each individual. It was interpreted not only by the community but within a unity of and with God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, actuated by Jesus and commanded by the Father. It was relational. It was one of personal identification not with a societal concept but with a personal experiential interaction with the Godhead. It was a dialog. It was not just a community of congregants for the purpose of worship and instruction but one whose

purpose was to gain experiential knowledge in kingdom practice, power, deliverance and a community of love. It was one whose purpose was to spread the kingdom to all created things. It took its identity from the redeemed and restored image of God.

The means of replication of this identity was taken from the educational system of rabbinic imitation. This simply was that you followed everything that your teacher did and/or thought in essence producing what would be the modern equivalent of a mini-me. As you were a disciple of the rabbi, if you could adequately reproduce an exact imitation of that rabbi, you were allowed to go forth and produce many more of the same.

Once the separation of the Hebraic from the Christian occurred the persecuted church evolved. However it did have the effect of severing the root of the system. Jesus was in fact an Old Testament Jew. To fully understand biblical teaching and practice, one had to understand what it was to be an Old Testament person. Christianity was taken out of its context. It became an apocalyptic cult waiting for the return of Jesus.

### When In Rome

The insertion of Roman religious organizational structure would be the next major undoing of restored/redeemed image of God and would result in major theological restructuring based upon governmental hierarchy. The change from a personal outlawed persecuted sect to one of a governmental backed and approved social construct would prove to be a major shift in emphasis. Rule and order became the impetus for the continuance of Pax Romana. Although this really represents the Roman law, justice system, and rule up till the time of the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. it still was the undergirding of Roman society. The Roman concept of bread and circus to control



and appease the masses is also involved. It was a general Roman policy to incorporate the gods of a conquered people into the Roman pantheon. The Hebraic God was the only one in Roman history to escape that inclusive arrangement.

Significant to this is the concept of Roman adoption. It does not resemble the American concept of adoption but is similar in nature as to when someone would give a daughter in an arranged marriage. Adoption was a preventative measure insuring a lineage would not die out. It was a means of continuance of *paterfamilias* (father of the family or more succinctly owner of the family), a means of Roman governance candidacy for public honors and provincial governmental positions. Choosing an heir was a careful process of vetting to insure a worthy successor of the family name. An adopted son often replaced the existing genetic lineage males as a means of controlling wealth and power.<sup>22</sup>

Roman educational system did not reflect the imitation form of the Greek or the Hebraic. It was a strict disciplinary form of rote memory and passing on of information; nothing more, nothing less. An educated Roman was not one who took religion or religious practice seriously but saw it as a something for those beneath them.

By the time Constantine assumed the mantle of Roman emperor, Pax Romana was on the verge of collapse. Bread and circus was no longer enough. The border of the Roman Empire was under attack on all sides. Much myth and legend has been cast about the impetus for the reasons for Constantine's conversion but the results are indisputable. The move to consolidate rule under one state religion would soon be felt for all history in Christianity. It was a calculated move to manipulate the masses into a defense against the

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Veyne, *The Roman Empire*, Arthur Goldhammer, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 17.

pagan hordes of the north and the Orientals of the east. The introduction of the Pontifex Maximus – the greatest of priests amongst a college of priests set the stage for theological councils whose aim it was to consolidate religious practice and thought. It was no mistake that Constantine held that office himself.

Pontifex Maximus was during the apex of Roman civilization a religious/political highbred office that has an advisory capacity to the Roman Senate. It had no official capacity other than the advisory capacity. Its purpose was not a matter of participation in the affairs of state so much as what impact those affairs of state would have upon the citizenry and their practices. What it was to become or tried to become would be a matter for another time and historically a contentious matter for the church as a whole.

From this we have the further disconnect of the restored/redeemed image of humanity to that of a system of codified creedal pronouncements that signify membership. It is a base line of measurement. You are removed from being an integral part of an organism to a replaceable number in an organization.

To this shift we can also see the condoned use of public space within the forum (what we would call the town square). The use of the basilica (a tribunal chamber of a king/emperor) architecture is still the predominant replicated church building to this date. Structurally the building was organized as a court room where a person could plead their case before a representative of the king/emperor of a state to gain favor, access or justice. It was a building of separation of spheres – those of the law (aristocracy) and those under the law (the people). It was a place to plead your case – not a building of dialog. It was a place of pronouncement.

The very structure of the building then does not allow for a personal relationship. It was a place to await the outcome. Therefore by the very structure of the building and its associative practices precludes the redeemed image of humanity for the broken and pleading image of Adam. The structure reflects an authoritarian, top down hierarchal system not an interpersonal relationship. You have familiar elements of a building, a chair, a table, and defined space but with different consequences. The chair, a cathedra, was now a seat of judgment and power. The table was used to gather items not share a meal. The space was a waiting place for judgment, pronouncement and order. It was not one of learning, growth and experiencing. It was all designed to intimidate.

Augustine – Thomas – Eckhardt

18 Now, however, there is a certain death of the spirit, consisting in the abandonment of previous habits and way of life, which comes about by repentance; and in the same sort of way the death of the body consists in its ceasing to be animated by the soul as formerly. And just as the spirit is refashioned for the better after the repentance which has abolished its old habits of depravity, so too we are to believe and hope that the body, after this death which we all owe to the chains of sin, is going to be changed for the better at the time of the resurrection. Thus it will not be flesh and blood taking possession of the kingdom of God, which cannot be; but this *perishable thing will put on imperishability, and this mortal thing will put on immortality* (1 Cor15:50,53), and will cause the spirit no trouble, because it will not experience any need, but will be quickened in perfect peace by a perfect and blissful soul. (Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Book 1)<sup>23</sup>

This is primarily the concept of how Augustine saw the creation as in the form of humanity. Augustine here speaks in the classical Greek style that clearly shows a superiority of the spiritual in diametric opposition to the physical. Augustine's emphasis

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<sup>23</sup> Saint Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, trans Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991), 113-114.

is clearly in the Platonic and Neo-Platonism philosophical understanding. We must also understand that Augustine is a product of his time. He is witnessing the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire. As such he takes on the aspect of an apocalyptic culture in seeing what they consider the normative aspect of life being threatened and destroyed. Putting rewards off in the distance was a way to deal with the times in hope for the future.

Augustine also saw the miraculous, thus the breaking through of the kingdom of God, within his lifetime but was cautious in his acceptance. He saw and had demonstrated for him the power of prayer in healing but again moved in a very cautious way in that by his time, this type of event was not normative but the exception to the rule. The why is simple in that his concept of humanity was tied directly to the broken image of humanity and not the redeemed image of the first Adam.

Certain heretics maintain that visible things are not created by the good God, but by an evil principle, and allege in proof of their error the words of the Apostle (2 Corinthians 4:4), "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers." But this position is altogether untenable. For, if things that differ agree in some point, there must be some cause for that agreement, since things diverse in nature cannot be united of themselves. Hence whenever in different things some one thing common to all is found, it must be that these different things receive that one thing from some one cause, as different bodies that are hot receive their heat from fire. But being is found to be common to all things, however otherwise different. There must, therefore, be one principle of being from which all things in whatever way existing have their being, whether they are invisible and spiritual, or visible and corporeal. But the devil is called the god of this world, not as having created it, but because worldlings serve him, of whom also the Apostle says, speaking in the same sense, "Whose god is their belly?" (Philippians 3:19). (Aquinas *Summa Theologica* Question 65, Article 1)<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Aquinas *Summa Theologica* Question 65, Article 1.

We can see from this that Thomas deals with some of the aspects of Greek philosophy that has become a heretical issue. The Gnosticism concept of a good god and a demigod permeated a lot of Christian thought. The problem with that is that it negated the concept of a creation that was in fact good but in dealing with it, Thomas and other fail in their attempt to complete the thought. They still see the flesh as a corruptible element that is inferior to the spirit. Thomas also through most of the *Summa* deals with the broken or incomplete image of human.

Thomas Aquinas was for all intents and purposes a student of Augustine. Thomas used and continued in the philosophical traditions of Augustine. He added to and developed the themes of Augustine. Thomas' opus work was one that was designed to evangelize those who were of Islam. Those of the Islamic faith have a particular penchant for Greek philosophy in that it follows the logic closely associated with their faith. The *Summa Theologica* was designed in the rhetorical style of the Greeks. It was a work of philosophy that became to be the theological doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. The problem with this is that Thomas abandoned the project sighting the futility of it. He in fact instructed his followers to destroy the manuscripts upon his death. They did not. They gathered them together and completed them with the aid of Thomas's extensive notes. Thomas does not deal with the image of humanity other than in terms of the essence of humanity. Thomas sees the ultimate goal of all creation to become like God. Thomas sees that all of creation has some spark or image of God within it but this is just the reiteration of the philosophical concepts of Aristotle and Plato. Thomas does not fully

deal with the image of humanity nor the fact that humanity is given dominion over creation. Augustine and Thomas continue in the Greek style of the separation of the physical properties from the spiritual properties.

About the same time there was another scholar who came from Germany who had a different tack upon the image of humanity. His name was Johannes Eckhart better known as Meister Eckhart. Born in 1260 he became a member of the Dominican order at an early age. Eckhart studied in France and Germany then became a professor in Paris in 1302. He was brought up on charges of heresy in the Papal Court in Avignon for his syllabus. On March 27, 1329 Pope John XXII issued a verdict condemning 17 articles from the syllabus as heretical and 11 more as being suspect of heresy. However Eckhart never heard nor saw them as he had died before the delivery.

Why the inclusion of this individual? His work was of a different sort. His work was not necessarily condemned on a theological matter as so much from a continued battle and power struggle for academic supremacy between the Franciscan and Dominican Orders. His main issue was that he saw God as intellect and not being in line with the Neo-Platonism of the day. However, the main development is in that Eckhart saw a unity with God. It is living from this unity that humanity reaches its goal.<sup>25</sup>

Eckhart here is delving into the image of humanity as it ties into the restored/redeemed image of humanity. In reading the removal of material from public site by the church it was noted that much of what Eckhart wrote was of value, especially in the academic field but was open to misinterpretation if left in the public field. It was too

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<sup>25</sup> Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer ed. (Stanford: Stanford University, 2011), s.v. "Meister Eckhart," accessed April 08, 2013, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/meister-eckhart..>

radical from the standard text and doctrine of the day. Again power structures decided for the masses what they could and couldn't know. Eckhart taught from the experience not just what he came to know through text. This was dangerous and challenged the hierarchal system of the day.

The Reformation represents a power struggle more than it does an overall theological revolution. What I mean by this is simply it was an orchestrated rebellion of the abuses of the hierarchy of an organization and their particular emphasis. To be crass it becomes a matter of you say po-tot-o and I say po-tay-toe. It was a control issue of sola scriptura versus doctrine and whether by grace or action you are saved. These are control issues of power structures and who holds them. They are semantic arguments. To prove their points, reformers on both sides went to extremes to score points. These are the leftovers of the imposition of a hierarchal structure of Roman rule. Calvin added to the argument with the inclusion of a work ethic that measured your level of being saved by the amount of accrued blessings of material goods. They argued over baptism rites and communion forms. These nuances have little to do with the day to day existence of believers outside of the political structures of church and state under which they live. They have little to do with the actual practical ministry. They have nothing to do with the kingdom of God, the Isaiah 61/Luke 4 declarative mission statement, or the Matthew 28: 17-20 directive.

Historically they have had an impact of creating other organizational structures that have aligned themselves with political power structures that will and have created still more organization of structures. The liberations that did take place were short lived. The question that has yet to be asked is why? The answer is because the core basic element that alters the complete picture has been ignored and confused. The why is a simple factor that you must go back to the beginning to affect the future.

It has been from the time of the reformation that the protestant tradition has chosen to throw the gifts away or to limit it so that they are no longer a valued part of our existence as human beings called Christian. They had done so to avoid what they perceived the abuse of the church by those who wish to buy their way into heaven and edify themselves at the expense of the people. They have tried to eliminate the use of images so that people do not venerate the image rather than the actual spiritual principle it represents. They have for the most part and with a few exceptions chosen to focus on the word and the table.

Calvin and Luther referred to a nominalist and mystical way of thinking about God. They sought a simplicity that focused on inward and individual piety. Luther was more apt for the use of images in worship and in private devotion. He based this on his emphasis of justification by faith. Moving this way he would then consider one is free to use images if they are helpful to the individual in worship and search for piety. On the other hand, Luther believed that if one did not believe – no amount or type of image would be helpful to reach belief.



They both dealt with the concept of image but both were mistaken in the concept of what the image was. Luther, although not enamored with the concept of the visual, had a strong inclination toward the use of music. Luther believed that God has the Gospel preached through the medium of music. He viewed music as a parallel to preaching and as such is the instrument for the work of the Holy Spirit. This in itself is an affirming statement for the use of all art within the context of the church. This was in light of the use of wisdom literature and its implication that the presence of the Spirit of God is an impartation of wisdom. I will go into greater detail over this matter at a latter point in our discussion.

Calvin on the other hand was not so generous in his thought about the arts or the gifts. He attacked the idea held by the then Pope Gregory the Great that images were the books of the uneducated. Calvin held unabashedly that whatever man could learn of God in images was absolutely futile and false. For Calvin the witness of the prophets totally condemn such an idea of revelation. He held that only through pure preaching of the Word that one can come to what he called a proper faith. But this was not the only idea that Calvin had. Calvin makes use of imagery in his theological musings for he proclaims that there is no spot in the universe where you cannot discern at least some glimpse of the glory of God. It was his followers who strongly condemned the use of all images. Even the Neo-Calvinist Abraham Kuyper continued to undercut art's more positive religious aspirations.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Hilary Brand and Adrienne Chaplin, *Art and Soul: Signposts for Christians in the Arts*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 25-34.

Humanity's portion or responsibility within the creation story is to be given and to take dominion over the created. One of those responsibilities involves the naming of the items of creation. Within the Hebrew and ancient understanding, to name something is to be given power over it. Thus the concept that Yahweh is never spoken out of the realization that we have no dominion over the Creator but He has dominion over us. To utter His name is the height of arrogance and blasphemy. Thus it is the realization that we are the created not the creator. But at the same time we must realize in our sharing in the creation process we have been given certain rights and privileges. A part of those rights and privileges is that we are made in the image and likeness of God. We then have a portion and an aspect of the creative effort. Although we are not God we can by imitation become involved in the process to call forth items into being that had not been there in quite the same form as before.

It is the purpose of all of creation to point to that which has made it. We can and do see the thumb print of the Creator in the pounding waves, laughter of children, the sky above and the caring of another person. God is not His creation but is present in the fact of His creation. We do not worship the creation but the creator. So it is with art – we as artists are not the true Creator we are but mere reflections of the process of being the Creator. We have been given unique gifts and talents so that we can illuminate that which is truth from that which is broken. We are not the perfect but the ones who are being perfected.

We must be also careful to remember that in a fallen world the tools which we use are flawed. A flawed and broken tool will not and cannot produce nor truly reflect the complete truth which is the Creator. We are made in the image and likeness of - we are not the Creator, we are the created. We cannot reflect the true and complete image of God, the Imago Dei.

As a part of creation we occupy a unique position in that as humanity we are made specifically in the image and likeness of that which has created us. We then as image, or more aptly a revelation of that divinity, must ourselves not call attention to our own ability to reflect the Creator or call attention to the quality of that image, but rather simply allude to and point the way to the Creator through the gift and witness of our lives and in response to that call to be images of God thus Imago Dei. This then is the reflection of the Father.

As a part of that reflection we must assume the image and likeness of Jesus. In that image is the understanding that Jesus, in the Gospel of John was present and functioning as a part of the Creator at the beginning of creation. In that reflection and image, we understand that Jesus is the light of the world and understands Himself to be the wisdom of God and the son of man. Through His incarnation we have regained through His sacrifice and resurrection the rights to be in relationship with the Father as He is in relationship to the Father if we accept Him as Lord and Savior.

As we do so we then can become living temples where by the Holy Spirit enables us through His gifting not to be reflections of our humanity but reflections of the relationship that the Father has with the Son and the Son has with the Spirit. We, therefore, become once more a part of that relationship no longer destined to live apart from and condemned to die but to live with and share in life eternal.

The concept of image thus identity is also dealt with throughout biblical text. Specifically in naming something you give it an identity. The Hebraic custom of naming something is a serious matter. You can especially see it in the name change – identity change marked in the biblical accounts: Abram – Abraham, Jacob – Israel, Simon – Peter, Saul – Paul. These represent significant changes in assignment and identity. It is the reordering of identity that makes significant and lasting change.

As we see in the continued movements of the in breaking of the kingdom of God and its principles, we see the movements do not last – even though some have significant lengths of time (the Methodist movement being of note.) But if you track all of the movements from Pietisms, Anabaptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Third Wave they all lack one thing – a significant change of identity of the individual. They all deal from the aspect of the broken image of Adam through the lens of the cross. They acknowledge the movement of the Spirit but still deal in the concept of the broken image.

You can see an example of what identity change can achieve in the modern military boot camp. They strip the individual of the trappings of their previous life and

give them the new identity of the unit. Their clothes change, their hair changes, their attitude changes, they are ranked, given new tasks to perform and a mission to achieve. Talk to an American Marine after they are no longer a marine in practice – they continually speak of their identity as a Marine.

The problem with most movements of the church is that they do not follow the historical example of Jesus in modeling the discipleship methodology of restoring the full identity of the individual. You cannot follow the function of something if the form is broken. If the mold is broken, the form it produces does not operate as it should and cannot function as it is designed to do.

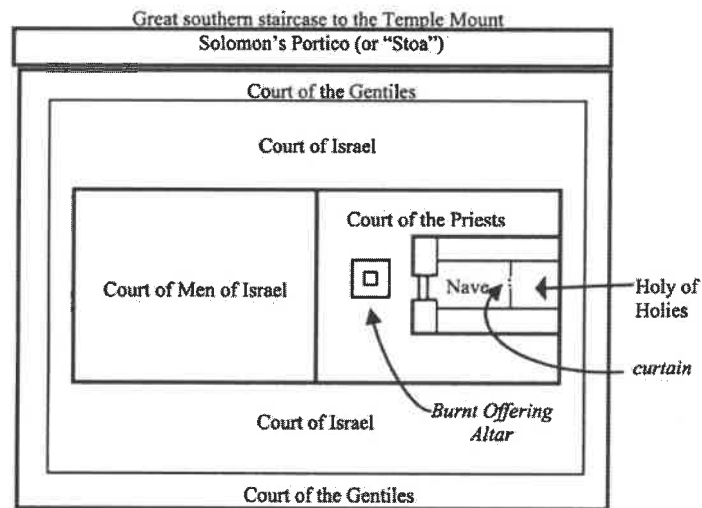
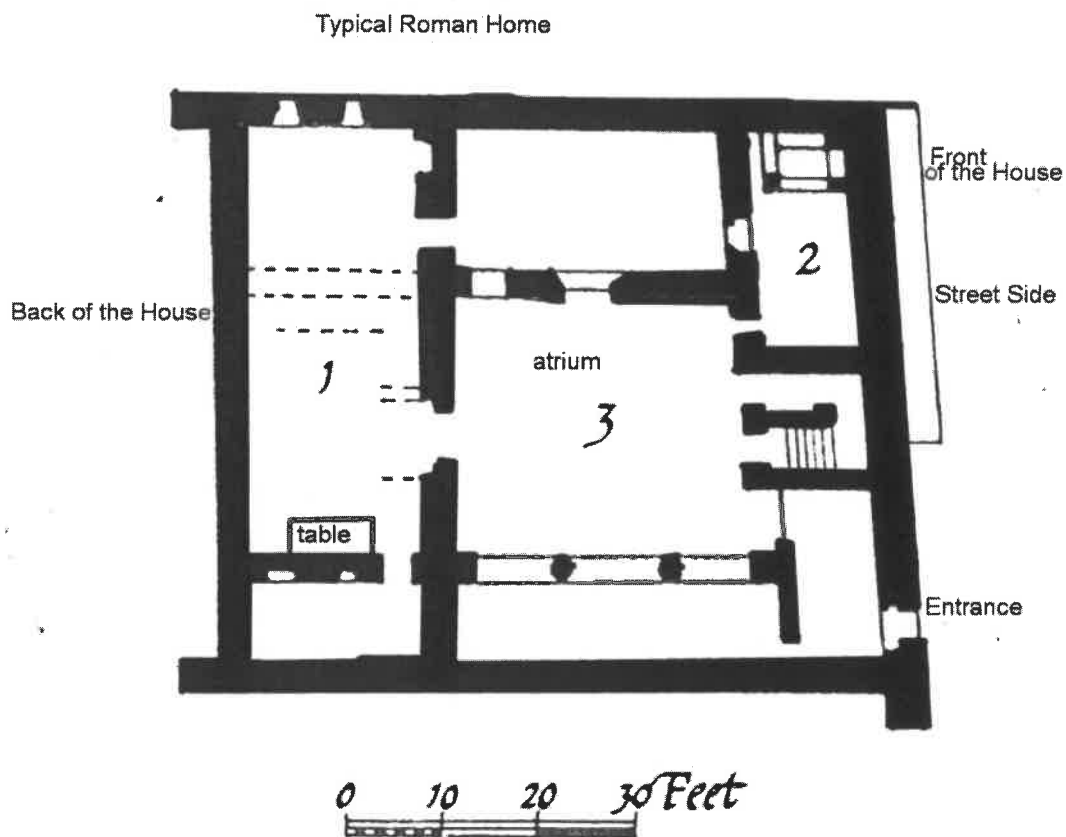


Figure 2.1 – Solomon's Temple <sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Dr. Paul W. Chilcote, "History of Christian Worship" (lecture, Asbury Theological Seminary, Orlando, FL, Fall Semester 2000).



### Plan of Dura Europos House Church

- 1 Eucharistic Assembly Room with dais at east end
- 2 Baptistry
- 3 Open courtyard

Figure 2.2<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

## Ancient Roman Basilica

Latin for chair is Cathedra:  
If the bishop sat in the chair  
the church was called  
a cathedral

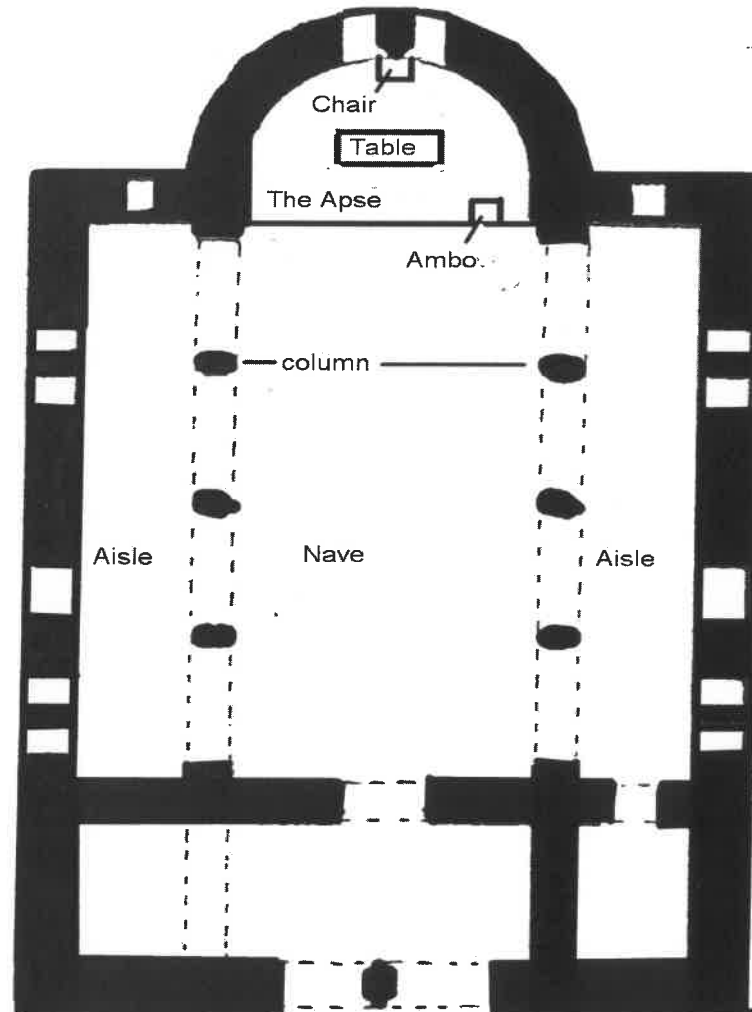


Figure 5 Ancient Roman Basilica/Church<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

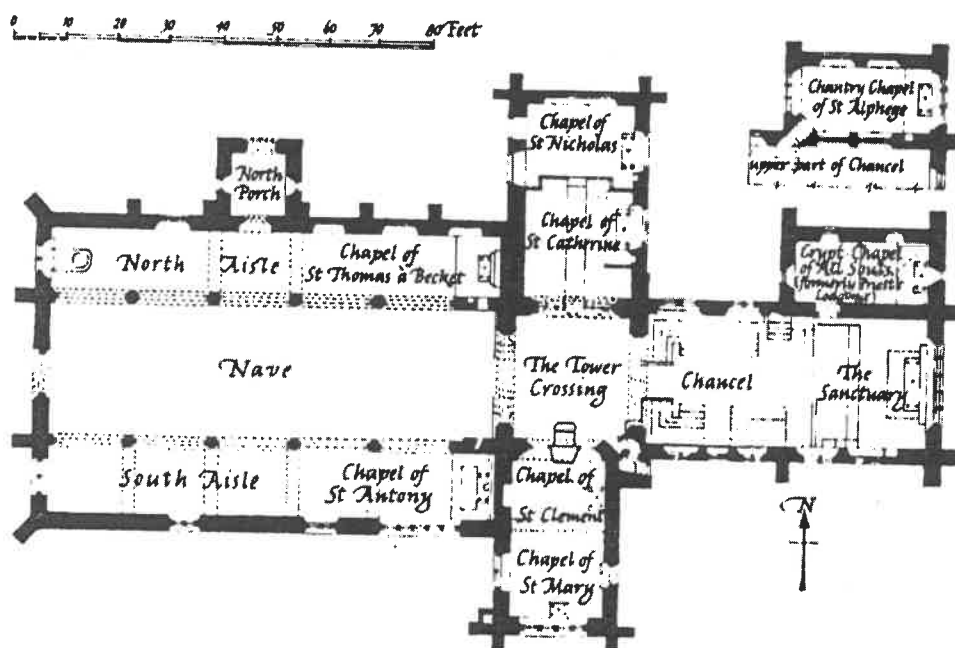


Figure 2.4 – Medieval Church<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid



### **Theological**

Theology is reactionary to the influences to the world around it, most notably historic. The time line of influence can be seen and felt in the writings of each age. The immediacy of the first writings of the Christian community can be viewed with the understanding of the persecution and with the sense of the imminent return of Jesus. However, as the age of Christianity develops, you can see the development of the writing style from the impending return to the persecuted and suffering church. The shift is from the immediate to the not yet. The shift then becomes one of emphasis, of delay that moves the predominance to the persecuted church.

The unfortunate aspect of this development is that it becomes the archetype of the kingdom delayed rather than entering into the kingdom, the kingdom within and the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The archetype should be and is the life of Jesus. The simplicity of the message and the power therein is easily replicated and most importantly demonstrated. However this is not the case. Historical influences as well as cultural influences have taken precedent. This begins to flavor much of the writings of the early church. The suffering church takes its comfort in the image of the suffering savior rather than the redeemed and restored image of the son of man. The broken image is powerless, impotent and pitiful. People taking comfort in that image become that image. The miraculous, signs and wonders are for others – not for the individual. This is far from the truth but quickly becomes the pattern. To be a saint is to suffer and only suffer as seen under this dynamic. That is because they cannot see themselves as taking on the fullness of their true image because that is not what is being presented. Suffering and persecution are a part of the fundamentals but are not the exclusive aspect of the Christian image.

What is being presented in the west is the broken image that leaps over the birth and life of Jesus, concentrates on the betrayal and suffering Christ, stops at the cross, barely mentions the resurrection and only in terms of Easter morning, ignores Pentecost and holds hope in an eschatological/apocryphal future reward for enduring for the eye on the future prize. That distorts the image of a body involved in the now and the not yet, redeemed, set free, and empowered.

The full aspect of what Jesus was doing and what he was prescribing was tied to identity. That identity was directly aligned with the image of God (*Imago Dei*). The root of the word image means to imitate. The imitation is none other than being what we would first learn about in Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. Specific in this discussion is the elements found within Genesis 1:26 – 31. The entire programmatic entity of Jesus' existence followed the pattern of imitation of what it was the Father was doing. Jesus was imitating the Father. He was about the Father's business or in my Father's house (Luke 2:49). His first public miracle was a creative miracle (John 2:3-10). He could only do what the Father was doing. If you saw Jesus, you saw the Father. (John 5:19-47)

The *Imago Dei* is the key element within any true dynamic. (Genesis 1:26-31, John 14:6 - 16:1) It continues within that context with being given dominion and thus the power (*dyunamus*) to act upon the whole of creation as outlined in Genesis 1: 27-31. The fact is that if we are to start at any point within the discussion of any individual or for that matter anything, we must first speak of its identity. For it is within that identity that the individual finds meaning, value and purpose with the power and ability to act. Without it there is a tendency to take on or try varied identities looking to find ones meaning in life, what value one has and what the purpose of life is. It leads to misplaced action and

wielding of power. Given the communality of identity of which we are; it runs counter to the cultural aspect of meaning, value and purpose. Culture makes it increasingly easy to obtain, gain, and maintain the wrong image and likeness.

### The Imitation of Christ

The opening statement of the spiritual classic *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis, “He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness (John 8:12), saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, how we ought to imitate His life and manners.” This is the elemental key of the Christian life. It is the imitation of Christ that is to take place. Within that imitation is the capacity of true individual enlightenment and the ability to clearly see beyond the confines of the human heart to that of the Father’s heart. It is the ability to know. In this is our chief concern of existence: the meditation of the life of Christ, the imitation and the action through the empowerment (grace) provided.

In this meditation comes the modern question of “what would Jesus do”. The unfortunate aspect of the WWJD movement was that it never explored the identity of Jesus but only took into account the action not the cause. It was a limited reactionary identity. Nonetheless the WWJD question when viewed from the point of complete contextual identity becomes a starting point of not only how to exist but it becomes an empowering aspect of the word of God written upon the heart of every believer with the ability to do more than imagined.

The problem is, rather than repeating the obvious discourse of the imitation of Jesus – in the fullness of the *Imago Dei*, we have adopted and adapted the message. We did this not necessarily to make it culturally relevant (relevancy has never really been an

issue) but to make it culturally acceptable for the times in the context of historical circumstances of how it impacts the lives of those in it. Yes it should be relational to the context of the day but the basic and elemental concept should never be de-emphasized because the message is timeless. Instead of remaking culture to its intended dynamic – a restorative, redemptive, reconstruction - we are remaking the discourse in the image of the culture. The impact of the cultural on those who would become “doctors of the church” has immense implication on the transmittal of the transformative message of the full gospel. Here we must discuss the beginning division of the emphasis of the message. Even within a short period of historical reference – one generation (from Pentecost to the Temple’s destruction), there exists a difference in emphasis in the message of Paul as to the message of Jesus.

*Basileia Tou Theou, Dynamis Theo; Jesus and Paul and End Time View*

Part two section six: *The Dominion of God* of Ben Witherington’s book *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World*<sup>31</sup>, speaks of “*The Reign of the Regent: Paul and the Basileia tou Theou.*” *Basileia tou Theo* is translated as the Dominion/Kingdom of God. Witherington makes an observation that is important to the course of how theology is to be played out; “it appears that for both Paul and Jesus the *basileia* was an already and not-yet matter. They spoke of this *basileia* as something involving both the present and the future.” Witherington goes on to explain that Paul’s emphasis seems to be with the not-yet aspect. This then would move toward an apocalyptic emphasis for a matter that is eschatological. We are in the end times – those times after the redemption moving toward

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<sup>31</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World*, (Downers Grove: IL: IVP, 1992), 49-74.

the full revelation of the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Paul's emphasis appears to be that of the ability to lose the inheritance of being in the dominion of God – thus the kingdom – through acts that negate the gospel.

Witherington's conclusion is that Paul does not suggest that the kingdom is in the present but linguistically it is a future event. This is where it is most pressing for our discussion in that Paul does speak of the power of the *basileia* in the present. He goes on to state that the effects of that power can be seen in people in the now. In further description Witherington states that it would appear that the *basileia* has to do with the spiritual transformation of human beings in the present. He continues to state that Paul does associate a physical transformative event of people and the world occurring as a future event with the return of Christ. The transformative event in the now is of a spiritual nature only. This then would be a limitation of the power of the kingdom that has implications for the future view of theological emphasis. This limitation of the power of transformational events to only the spiritual does damage to the belief that all things are possible through Christ and through what the Father is doing. This is a delay in what already has been done.

In comparison between the use of *basileia* between Jesus and Paul, Witherington makes the distinction that Paul speaks of it as inheriting it whereas Jesus speaks about it as entering into it with both placing equal stress on the ethical prerequisites involved in their approach.<sup>32</sup> Jesus' entering into the kingdom speaks of the process of making the kingdom apparent in the now, developing it as it goes and completing it as a future

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 67.

action. In the sense of a linguistic statement it would be considered to be in the future perfect tense as it was an action that was started in the past, is continuing and being acted upon in the present, and will be completed sometime in the future. Witherington's conclusion is that *basileia* in the now definition is the "in-breaking of God's dynamic saving power or reign, which can affect the whole person." It is confirmed in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 1 versus 17-18 where transformation of the individual takes place.<sup>33</sup>

There is another point of significance that takes place by the *dynamis Theou* (power of God) that comes upon them. The demonstration of the power of God is central to full message of the Gospel as discussed in Jon Rutven's *What Is Wrong with Protestant Theology*. It is clarified under the text of John 3: 3, 5 where Jesus links birth by the Spirit and entering into the kingdom of God.<sup>34</sup> This makes a clear emphasis and distinction between the teachings of Jesus as opposed to the teachings of Paul where that slight change will make significant course differentiation for future generations.

What does this all mean? Basically there is no disagreement as to the present effect of the power of God being displayed within the now. The aspect of miracles, signs and wonders is not a debate at this point. Again the centrality of it is taken as a given – one being synonymous with the other. What is delayed is the full manifestation of the kingdom of God which is to come with the *Parousia* – the second coming of Christ. Jesus' point is a continual advancement as scripted from Genesis – taking dominion, subduing – whereas Paul's is a personal spiritual transformation of limited participation

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

with a final and glorious conclusion in a dramatic apocryphal occurrence. The significance is in what Jesus demonstrated within his ministry and the theology of Paul emphasizes in his. Jesus fully comprehends that the *Basileia tou Theou* in his ministry represents a redemptive action and a healing activity as witnessed in both Matthew 11: 2-19 and Luke 7: 18-35 within the now.<sup>35</sup> This is not to say that the fullness of its presence is within the now rather just the opposite that the power can and is being demonstrated now and is progressively exponentially occurring as witnessed by Jesus' statement in greater works will you do. The message of Jesus then revolves around the demonstrable power now, the redeemed identity at present (Luke 15:11-32) and the fullness of the kingdom/dominion progressively later but still in evidence within the now.

In Luke 15: 11-32 the demonstration of restored identity is powerfully evident. The prodigal father – not the son – demonstrates the now in the restoration of the identity of the lost even as they are not yet fully restored. It is an unconditional return to former placement with the Father's kingdom – despite the present condition of the one returning. Therefore it is a process but one that empowers the individual to act as inheritors within the now but goes forward in rebuilding in the now and in the future.

Paul's emphasis is the cross-centric broken identity, and eschatological, and apocryphal. He does not play down the now but the emphasis is in preparing for the full manifestation at some time in the future – as yet to be determined – but not far off. It is a constant in the early teachings of Paul that the *Parousia* is inevitable within a few days. That, however, shifts in a minute fashion to that of Paul's later teachings that place it at a

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 69.

later time but still within his expected lifetime and then shortly thereafter. This slight shift of emphasis gives way to a societal schema whose emphasis is the immediate suffering of the individual and how that individual deals with it.

Much like the course correction of just one degree within a super tanker crossing the ocean – that one degree shift can represent hundreds of miles of course differentiation at the end of that voyage. This emphasis becomes increasingly vast as the timing of the *Parousia* is moved from the soon to a future manifestation. This shift necessitates a change in the message of, as the fairly modern hymn states, soon and very soon we are going to see the Lord, to one that has to deal with the immediate climate of the day and its affect upon how people see the integration of theology in daily life. There also is a dualistic approach dependent upon whose teaching you follow. Paul is predominate among the western evangelists according to textual input. His discourse will shape the theological conversations for decades to come.

Also of note is the difference between the writings of Paul and those of the other apostles. In comparing the two you will find a difference in emphasis. This is also a locational schism of approach in that Paul largely went west where the Apostles went mainly north, south and east. The writings of the other apostles are veritable synoptic repeats of the full gospel message of Jesus; a consistent message of the Rabbi under whom they have become the *Imago Dei*. Paul on the other hand establishes a discourse based teaching method to match the Greek influenced philosophical culture to whom he serves. The modality of that teaching is the suffering Christ, whom we have been crucified with, having died to ourselves, and who await the coming of the fullness of



dominion/kingdom in an eschatological/apocryphal victory. The difference is the emphasis on from the transformational implementation to the informational.

Add to this the coming schism between Judaism and its upstart Jesus sect plus the heavy influence of Greek philosophical thought and teaching methods of *gymnasium*. This might not seem to be a theological issue but it has direct bearing on it. How does it do this? It does it by taking away the need for identity re-establishment of the redeemed *Imago Dei* (Image of God) that we were created in. It moves from a transformational event and to a dissemination of information bound in the confines of scriptural text and philosophical debate.

The original teaching methods of Jesus are not unlike those of standard Rabbinical teaching methods of His time. Why would this be – because they follow the theological impetus of Genesis 1:26-31 of the *Imago Dei* and the *dynamis Theou* as demonstrated in miracles, signs and wonders.

#### Rabbinical Teaching Methodology: If You See Me, You Have Seen the Father

In the Journal of the American Academy of Religion, there is an article by Martin S. Jaffee dealing with this issue. It is called the “Rabbinic Ontology of the Written and Spoken Word: On Discipleship, Transformative Knowledge, and the Living Texts of Oral Torah”.<sup>36</sup> The article itself is a narrative of what it means to be a true disciple inclusive of the time of Jesus. Much of it belays our misconception of what is meant by the Oral Torah, the article highlights the aspect that the “Oral Torah” is the transformative action of moving the Written Torah – which is the scriptural pronouncement – to one that is

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<sup>36</sup> Martin S. Jaffee, “A Rabbinic Ontology of the Written and Spoken Word: On Discipleship, Transformative Knowledge, and the Living Texts of Oral Torah,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol., 65 no 3 (Fall 1997): 525 – 549.

written upon the hearts of the disciple so that it can become the “Living Torah.” This is the modality of Jesus.

Specific to this is the concept that within the Rabbinic literary oral traditions, *Oral Torah*, is a series of personal encounters between what is called the Rabbinic Sage and those who would be their disciples whose origins can be traced biblically back with Moses’ instructions to those of his associates.<sup>37</sup> This then is a system of discipleship whereby those participating in the discipleship process become the living embodiment of *Torah* which according to Jaffe “ontologically speaking sustains the world.”<sup>38</sup> However this is where the intrigue/caveat comes into play. This system is similar to that of the Greek terminology of *paideia*. This is an educational system that brings about the ideal citizenry of the Greek *polis* (city/state).<sup>39</sup> This term is in fact used in Jaffe article to represent the dominant place in society of the Rabbinic Sage as the representation of *Torah*.<sup>40</sup> The problem is that since they are so closely related that some might inadvertently interchange one with the other.

Jaffe goes on to state that the basis for discipleship is a social contract between two or more individuals having at its core a hierarchy of relationship. That relationship is that of a superior and a subordinate(s). Jaffe refers to it as a “discipleship community.”

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 525 – 549.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 528.

<sup>39</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1986), 40 – 123.

<sup>40</sup> Martin S. Jaffee, “A Rabbinic Ontology of the Written and Spoken Word: On Discipleship, Transformative Knowledge, and the Living Texts of Oral Torah,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 65 no. 3 (Fall 1997), 528.

Here the individuals involved in the community interact according the established role.<sup>41</sup>

It is a reconstruction of the parent-child relationship within the context of an educational system. Both are responsible for the transmittal of cultural traditions. The teacher(s) is (are) not a directly linked biological family structure. However, the community does take on all of the responsibilities of that structure in how the individuals relate to one another. Thus the teacher takes upon the role of mother and/or father and the students takes the role of brothers and sisters.<sup>42</sup> (You can find this often in Jesus' speech patterns of how he refers to the disciples.)

Key to this relational interaction is the intensification of communal interplay between functions of education and family. It is for all intents and purposes a return to childhood to be reformed/transformed as a human being. In the discipleship structure that transformative response is for the disciple to fully embody the teacher's/master's achievements. Thus it is to recreate the image in total of the teacher/master. Because the teacher's achievement is seen to be greater than that of the natural family unit having reached the highest level attainable; the teacher is often referred to as "Father" or "Mother". Noteworthy of this arrangement is that arrangement will often supplant the familiar loyalties and affections.<sup>43</sup>

There are other important distinctions between the traditional education methodologies and that of discipleship. The school's function is mainly to transmit knowledge so that a pupil may become functional participants in the religious and/or

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 529 – 530.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 530.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

cultures of their time. This is a *formative* knowledge in that it shapes the basis for the individuals' identity and their ability to creatively participation and contributes to societal structure. This then is the base line for human interaction within the context of that society/culture. In discipleship, the individual is challenged to recreate/reformulate their basic identity through emulation of the master that they have modeled. This then is *transformative* thus creating in some sense a new being.<sup>44</sup>

The axiom is that the discipleship–community becomes the medium for transformative knowledge, emulated by the master through impartation. The primary goal of the community is proof of the disciples' possession of that transformative knowledge. This may entail imitation of the actions, teachings, narratives, etc. of the master.<sup>45</sup> Emulation may involve imitation of actions, memorizing teaching, and/or telling stories about the master's deeds etc. It may also involve a psychological identification with the master. It then has the effect of the formation of very complex psychological relations among the disciples in conjunction with how that individual assimilates the person of the master. It can then be said that transmission of transformative knowledge is at the very heart of the discipleship–community.<sup>46</sup> It is the basis of the paradigm.

Jaffe suspects that the discipleship communal structure responsible for reshaping lives by redemptive patterns is stable from culture to culture. This is key but unfortunately is often ignored. It does allow for change dependent upon the content and the desired transformation of the individual. Jaffe does allow that the communal structure

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 531.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

that reshapes lives via redemptive pattern remains a relative constant.<sup>47</sup> Jaffe sights several groups: *Alexandrian Therapeutae*, the *Yahhad of Qumran*, the *Pharisees*, and the primitive Jesus-communities as examples of transformative discipleship.<sup>48</sup>

Herein lies the key. The leadership of these groups were to Jaffe's thinking *Torah* transformed into the embodiment of a human being.<sup>49</sup> The word of God is not only scriptural but a living, breathing entity.

Again we can call to witness the writings of Thomas A Kempis that gives testimony to this type of discipleship "The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrine of holy men; and that hath the Spirit will find therein *the hidden manna* (Rev 2:17)." Jesus was the living example of the *Imago Dei* and fully modeled the transformational discipleship model.

### The Shift

The shift between Paul and Jesus was subtle. The emphasis noted previously is the reason. Paul being a second generation disciple/apostle, Greek educated, originally a follower of the Pharisee sect of Judaism, and having a rhetoric based teaching style, would have great influence upon the evangelistic theater in which he participated. Paul's cross centric eschatological emphasis does turn the direct teaching elements away from the demonstration of power in the now, fullness gained in the eschatology emphasis of Jesus. At the source of this is Paul's own background as a Pharisee.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 531-532.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 532.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 541.

At the center of the Pharisee sect of Judaism beliefs are several main factors that influence the writings of Paul. They believe in an after-life and that God punished those who perpetrate evil and rewards those are righteous in a world that will come. The Pharisee sect then has an eschatological/apocryphal bent with an emphasis of delayed reward. Paul's emphasis in the imminent return of Jesus plays into this belief system with the added factor of the Pharisaic belief in a reign of peace brought on by the promised Messiah. The stylistic clash of Jesus' coming as opposed to the Pharisaic belief of a reign of peace brought on by the Messiah becomes evident.

The Pharisees were a semi-political semi-religious entity of the common people and not of the priestly cast. They believed in a highly developed interpretive understanding of scripture. Their understanding was that Moses was given an Oral Torah that was equal to the Written Torah. With this in mind you can see where the emphasis and understanding of Paul would be and where it would lead. He did not sit directly at the feet of Jesus but rather was introduced/converted through an encounter with the risen Jesus. Paul's tutelage and education was primarily through secondary sources. He also spent a short period amongst the apostles (Acts 9:1-31).<sup>50</sup>

The one other implication of modern protestant theological basis is this: Paul is most often preached in the modern pulpit rather than the Gospel. The why is a simple matter to identify. With the Jesus' emphasis out of the way, the emphasis of Paul easily gives way to the Cessasionalist view point of the powerless, no miracle, cross centric, salvation and a future reward only rubric.

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<sup>50</sup> Mitchell G. Bard, *Ancient Jewish History: Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes*, in the Jewish Virtual Library, accessed September 10, 2014, [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/sadducees\\_pharisees\\_essenes.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/sadducees_pharisees_essenes.html).

### Augustine of Hippo

Augustine is the next area of concern theologically over the issues of the *imago Dei*, *Basileia tou Theou* and the *dynamis Theou*. It is important to understand Augustine's background in that it forms the basis for his theology as Augustine was a skilled and noted student of rhetoric. Rhetoric is the discipline of speaking and writing in an elegant and convincing manner. Truth was not at its core or its concern. Its point was to win the argument.

At the time Cicero was considered the master of the rhetoric style. Cicero however added something to the mix – he was a philosopher as well. It was in pouring over the work of Cicero that Augustine came to the conclusion that rhetoric was not enough and that seeking truth was important to the equation of developing oneself. This was the starting point of Augustine's journey theologically. From there Augustine found the teachings of Manicheism.

Founded in the third century by the Persian named Mani, Manicheism touted two principles which it believed to be at the core of the human condition. One is called the "light" which is deemed to be spiritual in nature and the other "darkness" which is deemed to be matter. They exist eternally in the universe. The intermingling of these two principles has resulted in the production of evil. One gains salvation in the separation of the two elements preparing our spirit to disappear into the state of light. Procreation was seen as a physical example of the mingling of the two principles. Because of this it was to be avoided. Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Mani himself were seen as those who achieved

this salvation.<sup>51</sup> Manicheism also had a profound dislike for Christianity and in particular to the Bible itself finding it primitive and linguistically barbaric. They taught that the Bible was not in fact the word that emanated from the eternal principle of light especially since evil was not a creation of that principle. Evil was in fact the creation of the principle of darkness. This appealed to Augustine's problem with both the inelegance of biblical text and an explanation for the existence of evil. Augustine found solace in the teachings which Manicheism offered on these points. Manicheism held that the Bible, especially the Old Testament, was not in fact the word of the eternal principle of light or in terms of Christianity divinely inspired. Mani also held that evil was not a creation of that principle thus God but was in fact the principle of darkness.<sup>52</sup>

Neo-platonism was the next highly influential aspect of Augustine's intellectual pursuit of truth and it was in Milan that he became a Neo-platonist. The purpose of Neo-platonism was through study, discipline and mystical contemplation you could reach the source of all being which they deemed to be the Ineffable One. The process was said to bring on a state of ecstasy.

Neo-platonism was critically different from Manicheism in that there was only one principle through which all of reality was derived. It was explained that the emanation of reality can be compared to concentric circles in a pond that had been

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<sup>51</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1 The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, ( New York: HarperSanFrancisco, Harper Collins Publisher, 1984), 208.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 210-211.



disturbed by the impact of a pebble. The source of impact is considered to the superior point. As you move further away the emanations become more inferior. Thus evil consists of moving away from the superior source. Evil is turning ones attention to the inferior realm.<sup>53</sup>

The final aspect of Augustine's influence is perhaps the most important in solidifying his biblical approach. This was Augustine's introduction of Ambrose by Augustine's mother Monica. The key is that Ambrose interpreted many of the passages of the bible allegorically. These were the very passages that created difficulties for Augustine. Allegory was an acceptable form of viewing literature in the canons of rhetoric thus it deeply appealed to Augustine's earliest training and basis in logical thinking processes. This then made scriptural interpretation more palatable for Augustine and he committed himself to life as a Christian. Augustine left his post as a professor of rhetoric and made plans to spend the rest of his days in monastic retreat.<sup>54</sup>

Here begins the basis of the issue. Yes there are texts within the bible that fall within the allegorical but not all. So to interpret something based upon a presumption and not in a contextual manner is to place one's own prejudice upon it. This prejudice is usually based in the context of the day that the interpreter exists within. To truly interpret text you must as best as possible see with eyes from that point in time forward to the present time. From that point context will guide how you deal with the text in the current day. Each age has access to better tools and better understanding based upon the pursuits of past generations – if they dutifully pass things forward rather than project inference

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 208-210.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 211.

backwards. Augustine projected backwards his own cultural prejudices to be able to reconcile his own beliefs to the beliefs, precepts and intentions upon the teachings of the past. This skews the lineage of the text from the original text to one that is more in alignment with those of the interpreter.

Augustine settled at Cassiciaum with a few others whose goal was mystical contemplation and philosophical inquiry. This was not the monasticism of the monks of the desert, but an ordered life style devoid of superfluous comforts centered on devotions, study and meditation. It was during this time that Augustine wrote his first works still highly Neo-platonic but with an appreciation of Christian teachings. Augustine's intention was a life devoted to a philosophical life.<sup>55</sup>

Here you can see where one might possibly arrive at the conclusion that it is better to separate yourself from the present cultural context. Augustine's attempt at separation was passed forward to the Reformation where communities set apart were established in a misinterpreted sense of a city set upon the hill for all to see. This type of community can be taken as either an invitation to join or one of exclusivity based upon association to acceptance by the community. This is not pertinent to the overall discussion of this piece but should serve as a caveat for those who might start this type of community. This could be the source for the future Calvinistic communities if one were to follow a logical line of thought based upon Augustinian theology. It is a line of exclusivity that is contrary to the message of inclusivity of Jesus.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 212-213.

Amongst Augustine's writings was his theory of a just war that came about as he was dealing with the Donatists.<sup>56</sup> Here we consider two of Augustine's significant writings – *Confessions* and *The City of God*. *Confessions* is what might be called Augustine's spiritual autobiography in prayer format recounting his pilgrimage to faith.<sup>57</sup>

The other work worthy of special mention is *The City of God*. The immediate motive compelling Augustine to write this was the fall of Rome in A.D. 410. Since at that time there were many who clung to ancient paganism, soon it was charged that Rome had fallen because she had abandoned her ancient gods and turned to Christianity. It was to respond to such allegations that Augustine wrote *The City of God*, a vast encyclopedic history in which he claims that there are two cities, each built on love as a foundation. The city of God is built on love of God. The earthly city is built on love of self. In human history, these two cities always appear mingled with each other. But in spite of this there is between the two of them an irreconcilable opposition, a war to death. In the end, only the city of God will remain.

Meanwhile, human history is filled with kingdoms and nations, all built on love of self, which are no more than passing expression of the earthly city. All these kingdoms and nations, no matter how powerful, will wither and pass away, until the end of history, when only the city of God will stand. In the particular case of Rome, God allowed her

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 215-216.

and her empire to flourish so that they could serve as a means for the spread of the Gospel. But now, that this purpose has been fulfilled; God has let Rome follow the destiny of all human kingdoms, which is no more than just punishment for their sins.<sup>58</sup>

The issue here is an us versus them line in the sand, if we are to follow the logic and rhetoric. The concept of irreconcilable differences flies in the face of the possibility of transformational events. It furthers the concept of predestination in both personal and societal in a form that takes it beyond the redemptive and restorative aspects of the Gospel. Here is the danger of the statement in that it can be taken to the extremes in zealous disregard for the full message. It is true that there is an element of predestination within the Gospel message, however it is one that explicitly states that it is the intention, thus the predetermined concept, that none should perish. It is not exclusionary but inclusionary. Thus we have a conflict with the idea of free will in action. It is even a part of the Old Testament narratives especially that of Jonah when given the choice of destruction or redemption, the population chose redemption through repentance.

Augustine was the last of the great leaders of the Imperial Church in the West. When he died, the Vandals were at the gates of Hippo, announcing a new age. Therefore, Augustine's work was, in a way, the last glimmer of a dying age.

And yet his work was not forgotten among the ruins of a crumbling civilization. On the contrary, through his writings he became the teacher of the new age. Throughout the Middle -Ages, no theologian was quoted more often than he was, and he thus became one of the great doctors of the Roman Catholic Church. But he was also the favorite

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 216.

theologian of the great Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century. Thus, Augustine, variously interpreted, has become one of the most influential theologians in the entire Western church, both Protestant and Catholic.<sup>59</sup>

The telling approach of Augustinian Theology is in Augustine's book called *Teaching Christianity*. Here Augustine's methodology is a product of the influences of the time and of his experience. The entire praxis to teaching Christianity to the next generation is creating a school based upon rhetoric and philosophical elements to produce great intellectual orators who can convince the populous of the need to become Christian. The entire pattern is based upon a hybrid of Manichean and Neo-Platonism. His intention was to create a separate society devoted to study and a contemplative life in an altered reality of the Genesis commands to be fruitful and multiply. This patterning leaves out the aspect of demonstrable elements of the Gospel in the form of miracles, signs and wonders. It is an altered image of humanity as still being corrupt, still broken, and waiting for an eschatological/apocryphal final redemption – mirrored in the times of Augustine in the fall of the Roman Empire. It is a still, a not yet society, and a reward only in the next life. It displays no demonstrable power of God but only the frailty of a corrupt man to await something only if they can achieve a level of intellectual pursuit and ascetic purity.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 216.

Yes, a great thing indeed is man, made *to the image and likeness of God* (Gn 1:26-27), not insofar as he is enclosed in a mortal body, but insofar as he takes precedence over the animals in the dignity of a rational soul. And so the great question is whether human being ought to regard themselves as things to be enjoyed or to be used, or both.<sup>60</sup>

As you can see by this opening statement, that Augustine's concept of what humanity is based upon the Greek concept of the rejection of the physical element of man and the elevation of the spiritual soul of man. The very title of the section of Augustine's book states "Only God Alone is to Be Enjoyed."<sup>61</sup> This draws a direct line between physical creation and spiritual creation. This is the very element that drove what is known as the gnostic heresy. This concept does not exist within Genesis and is not expressed within the teachings of Jesus at any point. It can be said that Jesus does hold a contempt for the body through his teachings (Mark 9:43-50) that if a section of the body is the source of sin that it is better removed so that one can enter into the kingdom; but that is not the point of the teaching. It is not a rejection of the body as a whole but rather a removal of that which offends. It is not elimination but restriction. The teaching is rising to a higher ethical standard so that one is not consumed with the concept of corruption but on the higher ways of full existence. It is that you should not place a stumbling block in front of those little ones. It is about a completely restored image. It is not one that is dependent on a single entity of existence – body, mind, and/or spirit, but one that is in harmony with God's pronouncement that it was very good as a whole. Not separated or distinguished but whole. The corruption is a condition of viewing things as separate - a

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<sup>60</sup> Saint Augustine, *Teaching Christianity, De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P, (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1996), 114.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 114.

tunnel vision – that leads to incompleteness. Jesus stated it was finished and God had created it as complete. Humanity distorted the image by separating the image from the very entity that created it. Jesus restored the connection and gave the pattern by which to follow – body, mind, and spirit.

Augustine was criticized for this during his lifetime and parts of his teachings were completely rejected. It is on these very things that the reformers took hold of to support the cross centric elements of their theology in rejection of what they saw as the corruption and abuses of the institutional church. The sad thing is that the reformers did not challenge the Greek/Roman institutional academy/gymnasium methodology of teaching that passed along mere information, but instead the reformation embraced it. The continual rejection of experience – dialog, creativity, physical nature and manifestations of the Spirit – will lead to a powerless form of Christianity and theologically to Cessationalism.

At this point the question must be asked if the physical is corrupt – then why would it be necessary for a redeemer to take on the form of humanity. It would seem a useless practice for a savior to take on the task of physical crucifixion to achieve atonement. The logic of the argument falls. All elements must be redeemed thus body, mind and spirit must be involved. Not only these but those things which help constitute the various elements into a cohesive entity. The process of experience and intellectual pursuit of explanation of the experience must then go hand in hand. Without either one the other is incomplete. Thus practical assimilation and application must accompany informational transference to achieve true transformational existence. The order in which

they occur is inconsequential. It is important that they do all occur to be completely transformational. Thus it is the union of theological (spirit), philosophical (mind), and physiological (body) elements which make up human existence and experience.

### Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas was for all intents and purposes a student of Augustine. Thomas used and continued in the philosophical traditions of Augustine with the addition of Aristotle to the Neo-platonic. Not intended to be a theological treatise but a philosophical exploration of the theological, the *Summa Theologica* was designed in the rhetorical style of the Greeks. It was a philosophical debate broken down into five parts inclusive of supplementary materials. Thomas does deal with miracles, signs and wonders and confirms them. He does admit to a certain amount of deception in some.

Aquinas was born about 1225. At the age of five he entered the Abbey of Monte Casino as a Benedictine oblate (one dedicated to God) for his education until the age of fourteen when it was necessary to leave the politically endangered abbey. It was at the abbey he developed the pull toward religious life. He matriculated to the Imperial University of Naples where the major influences of his life were to be discovered – Aristotle and the Dominicans. There he studied Peter Lombard's *Four Books of the Sentences* (a systematic theology compilation based upon the Latin translation of the Bible by Saint Jerome) and produced a treatise on Aristotle called *Fallacies*.<sup>62</sup>

After being kidnapped by his family to dissuade him from the religious life and then gained his release, Aquinas continued his studies at Rue St. Jacques in Paris for a

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<sup>62</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *An Aquinas Reader; Selections from the Writings of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Mary T. Clark, (Garden City, NY: Image Books, A Division of Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), 10.



three year theological study followed by four years of seminary at Cologne. Under Albert the Great teachings and tutelage, Aquinas was ordained at the cathedral. Albert discovered Aquinas' mental acuties while reading a commentary on *The Divine Names* penned by Thomas. Returning to Paris for four years of advanced theological studies, Aquinas became Bachelor of the Bible and Scripture Lecturer while completing his work for a Master of Theology degree issued in 1256.<sup>63</sup>

Aquinas witnessed the transition of the monastic culture from isolation to one driven by the birth of the mendicant (ones relying on alms, charity, begging) orders – the Franciscans and the Dominicans. These orders would send out the friars on the medieval highways and byways to meet the people and thus engage the society rather than retreat as had been the practice. The practice of poverty was not with the concept of notoriety for holiness but as being able to move rapidly to areas in need of the Gospel. They believed their riches were in their relevancy to the culture of the time. Indispensable to this end was the procurement of manuscripts. The center of the transcription was Italy.<sup>64</sup>

Prior to this point, Christianity concerned themselves not with the condition of humanity but with souls. Aquinas, however, offered a robust and buoyant philosophy of reality in opposition to the philosophy of signs and symbols (which short-circuited this world to arrive immediately at the next) which was the axiom to this point of medieval theology.<sup>65</sup> Aquinas can essentially be defined as existential in the sense that his theology/philosophy is relating to experience. Although Existentialism is considered a

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

movement of the 19th and 20th centuries with proponents such as Heidegger, Dostoyevsky, and Tillich; Aquinas might be the source fount from which it sprung. The comparison is easily made between Paul Tillich and Thomas Aquinas in that during their times they were both considered to be a philosopher or theologian and/or both. In my view, they are interchangeable as Aquinas incorporates philosophic thought into theology leaving room for dialog.<sup>66</sup>

Central to this point is Aquinas' incorporation of Aristotelian philosophy without the conceptualization of a nature that is seen apart from God. For Aquinas the very act of existence cannot come from anyone other than God. It is in this that finite humanity must admit that existence comes from God which then makes humanity's possibility for change infinite. The relationship between the created and the Creator is an inevitable consequence of being created.<sup>67</sup> It is an open, dynamic relationship to the Absolute creative Being – the source of all existence and development. The finite reality becomes a participant or as Aquinas calls it participated in becoming dynamically open to the transcendent.<sup>68</sup>

It was common for Aquinas to speak to those who disagreed with him rather than refute them. This dialog was to be the hallmark of his style within the *Summa Theologica* and all of his works. Thomas' dedication to the intellectual led him to encounters with other professors, bishops, disciples of Mohammed and Greek Orthodox teachers, classical and contemporary thinkers, patristic and avant-garde theologians alike. Thomas

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 7.

was deeply influenced by the Eastern Christian mystic Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite and a Greek father of the Church, Maximus the Confessor, in blending East and West mentalities.<sup>69</sup>

Aquinas' beliefs were centered in the ecumenical precept of the unity of the East and West, the historical unity of time and eternity, and of the created and the Creator. It was here that Aquinas made considerable fruitful philosophical distinction. The unity of humanity is much more than a theological task, an economic or political achievement. For Thomas it was an act of love. It was not a static concept by a dynamic movement of love – the divine love of creation and redemption initiating human love that reaches God by participating in the power of the Resurrection.<sup>70</sup>

The year 1266 saw the beginning of the *Summa of Theology*<sup>71</sup> and the work *On a Common Intellect* where Thomas proved that Aristotle attributed to each man his own intellect. Aquinas never ceased to mediate on and comment on the Bible. He aligned himself with Augustine to the point where he saw himself as a collaborator especially in the New Wisdom that bound together faith and reason.<sup>72</sup> Aquinas was given an active role in reforming seminary education. He saw philosophy as a desirable addition to Christian beliefs and not a detriment.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 9.

The philosophical/theological element which is critical to Thomism is the inclusion of the Augustinian doctrine of creatures as the image of God foundational in the Genesis accounts. This is also part and parcel of the Platonic concept of exemplar causality. Thomas escapes Aristotle's categories of substance and nine accidents by going deeper drawing in existence as infinite becomes the exemplar of all finite participants. For Aquinas participation by creatures is limited in the sharing of existence with all the perfection that existence brings with it. To be the image of means to be after the image of the Supreme Exemplar – to be spiritual, united, to know, to live, to be free. This is the image of God in existence in action. Human evil then is tied to elements rooted in being in unlikeness to God.<sup>74</sup>

Simply put, humanity is the image and likeness of God, and enjoys the fullness of the perfection as long as humanity chooses to be in this image and likeness of God. To be outside of that perfection is to choose that which is the unlikeness of the image and likeness of God. This is the cause and causality of the Genesis creation stories not only in the sense of the seven days of Genesis 1 but also in the Genesis account of the fall of humanity. It then could be logically stated that the redemption of humanity is the restitution of the image and likeness of God in humanity.

Aquinas' identification of the central perfection -esse (essence/existence)- is an exemplar that is therefore a personal, un-participated being which is the prime source defined as God who is an efficient and formal exemplary cause.<sup>75</sup> Aquinas like Augustine saw humanity as radically existing *ad Deum* (toward God). It is because humanity shares

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 8.

existence with all creatures, humanity is horizontally related to all as man-in-the-world. Uniqueness is not questioned as in opposition to community and therefore cannot be confused as professing isolation of substance.

The admission of all of Aristotle's works into Christian thought was an admission of "all the natural values of human social activity". As such it was a rejection of the repudiation of this world found within Platonism. It was an acceptance of human values without abandoning Platonic transcendence. This is how Thomas saw humanity's ability to reach its true realization in One Exemplar – the God-man. In this sense Aristotle aided Aquinas in his quest to be more Christian.<sup>76</sup>

On December 6, 1273 Thomas Aquinas put down his pen making the declaration : "I cannot; such things have been revealed to me that all that I have written seems to me as so much straw".<sup>77</sup> He in fact instructed his followers to destroy the manuscripts upon his death. They did not. They gathered them together and completed them with the aid of Thomas's extensive notes. That then was to become a major theological doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

#### The Point of Comparison: A Ship Run Aground

As you can see within this nine-hundred year span between Augustine and Aquinas the theology of Christianity became in essence a treatise of philosophy. It moved from a dynamic, interactive, demonstrable, relational community to an intellectual pursuit. The divide was clearly drawn demarcating the differences between the have and

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 20.

the have not's. I want to make it clear that this is not a condemnation of the pursuit of understanding or trying to explain those things which were demonstrated, revealed and experienced in the earliest time of the Jesus movement. It is not. The purpose is simply to look at what happens when the extremities of what occurred and the pursuit of knowledge is not combined with the pursuit of application and it alone becomes the emphasis. The result is a Cessationist, powerless, and irrelevant identity of the individual and that of the church.

Information is part of a transitional platform. It is a point of departure and not the point of arrival. Information moved to practice becomes transformational. There is a modern phrase that is used within the social services field that is most apropos to our discussion – “I cannot hear your words because your example is screaming too loud in my ears”. Theology must be able to be demonstrated. Theory must follow practice. The problem with Christian theology is that what was able to be demonstrated was its powerlessness, its inability to affect change of any substantive meaning, its ineffectual ability to set the captives free, and its negation of miracles, signs and wonders. It limits participation in the fullness of the Gospel as taught, practiced, demonstrated, and lived in the person of Jesus plus found within the context of the documentation of scripture.

The problem with current theological thought is it is too closely tied to the concept of the fallen Adam. The current concentration is in Chapter 3 of Genesis (particularly verses 1 through 7). Chapter 2 is treated as the prolog to chapter 3; it sets the stage for the fall. Chapter 1 is limited to the idea that God created the world in a literal and limited period of time and action. This reversal of importance places an undue emphasis on the corruption of man. It makes way for the Greek concept of the corruption

of the flesh and the elevation of spirit born entities. The fact of the matter is that removal of any element of humanity (body, mind, and spirit) is to make humanity less than human. To place it in the terminology of Ben Witherington, you are placing the “emPHAsis” on the wrong “syLLABle”.<sup>78</sup>

This has led the church to an identity crisis and a power shortage. This broken Adam is reflective of the emphasis of sin and salvation. It does not take into consideration the established pattern of creation as it appears in the first thirty five verses of the bible. Because of this focus, it is hard to imagine that we, as broken, sinful humans could ever possibly approach the level of the early disciples, apostles or saints. It makes it impossible to capture the spirit of the early church and walk in the power, signs and wonders that it flowed in. This then negates the very image of Jesus by limiting the image of humanity to brokenness. It limits the relationship of God and humanity to one that is Deist (a god no longer active in or reactive to creation). It then places an undue emphasis on the cross and removes the movement beyond Pentecost to an actual proclamation of the good news in word and deed.

#### *Basileia Tou Theo, Dynamis Theo, and the Imago Dei as Intended*

The re-examination of the first 36 verses of the bible causes one to observe more than just a cycle of items being placed to establish a universal stage upon which actors play out a scenario of sin and salvation. It is a revelatory periscope of the beginning of an understanding of who God might be and into the identity of humanity.

It all starts within the text of Genesis. One of the predominant ones is Genesis 1:14 with the word sign. It occurs some eighty-four instances with the most common use

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<sup>78</sup> Ben Witherington used this phrase in many of his lectures at Asbury Seminary 2005.

being in reference to miraculous signs. It is usually tagged with the word wonder. Within Genesis 1:18 is the word saw which has the use in the prophetic as one who sees or has direct knowledge from God. This continues throughout the Genesis text. Significant in all of this is the creation of humanity. Humanity is made in the image and likeness of God (*Imago Dei*). The original construct of humanity is a reflection – an imitation of God. Humanity was given the capacity to act as an agent of God to have dominion to subdue. It is a communal situation represented in the making of humanity in tandem, male and female - not one superior to the other but one equal to as the reflection of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The blurring of that image was a part of the fall of man – but it wasn't the annihilation of the image it was the distortion. It was one that was to be redeemable, restorable, and re-empowered to establish the kingdom of God (*Basileia Tou Theou*) on earth as it was in heaven.

<sup>28</sup> Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. <sup>29</sup> Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. (Joel 2:28-29)

Here we have the beginning to the promise of redemption that will eventually be re-iterated as a part of the witness of Acts. Peter restates the testimony of the redemption and empowerment to re-establish the *Imago Dei* (image of God) and the *dynamis Theou* (power of God) which is the original intent of creation.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; <sup>2</sup> To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup> To grant those who mourn *in* Zion,



Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. <sup>4</sup> Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. (Isaiah 61:1)

This is an elemental prophetic statement of the purpose of the messiah as to what the ministry and purpose was to be upon the earth. It is the basis of the messianic movement and would be the claim of anyone who would fill that regiment and requirement. It should be noted here that the time line or limitation is not a particular time but until such time as the mission is fulfilled in all people – either in accepting or rejecting what it is that is to be done.

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. <sup>15</sup> And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. <sup>16</sup> And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, <sup>19</sup> TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD. (Luke 4:14-19)

Here we clearly see that Jesus brings forth and claims as his own the mantle of one who is called to the messianic mission. The inference here is clear and the only time limitation is in the proclamation of the favorable year of the Lord. Again this is not a limitation but a dedication to the continuance of the favor of God. As long as the gospel is proclaimed, therefore the rest is enforced. It is a continuance not a limitation.

<sup>NAU</sup> 1 And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. <sup>2</sup> And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. <sup>3</sup> And He said to them, "Take nothing for *your* journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not *even* have two tunics apiece. <sup>4</sup> "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. <sup>5</sup> "And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>6</sup> Departing, they *began* going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. (Luke 9:1-6)

This is where Jesus sets forth the methodology of replication of the missional aspect. Jesus passes on – imparts – the authority and power to reproduce the Isaiah 61/Luke 4 anointing. With this, Jesus is resetting the clock backward in redemption of the Adamic creation putting it back to the first and intended. The recaptured authority and power that was brought forth not only in the birth of Jesus, but with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. With this it becomes the proclamation of the gospel – thus the good news, death, resurrection and the events of Pentecost. It insures that this pattern is not only present in the time of Jesus but that it can and will be replicable in the time to come until the final return and complete re-establishment of the kingdom of God.

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. (Matthew 10:1-8)

The inference here is clear as to what that authority contained. Not only was it proclamation of mere words but was followed, endorsed and witnessed in actions and deeds. The course of events began with a training period within the familiar but then expanded even beyond that in the final phase. It is a re-gifting to the fullness of the identity, value and purpose of humanity.

<sup>14</sup> "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

The methodology of preaching was not in the proclamation of mere words but rather as witnessed through actions and deeds. It was the duty of a student to mimic what their teacher did, and said. To them this was the complete method. It was not a matter of one but a both/and approach. It was the re-establishment of what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God. Image, imitation, and likeness are all active ingredients. They are actions not just mere words. Even within the axioms of our time – actions speak louder than words.

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

This then is the commissioning – the end of boot camp where your full assignment is given to you. Through complete imitation of the teacher the student was given complete authority and power to act in the stead of the teacher. This is the re-establishment of the original command to Adam. It is the redemption of the full intention of creation. It is the reclamation of the complete image of God.

<sup>16</sup> "The Law and the Prophets *were proclaimed* until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it". (Luke 16:16)

Here we have the witness that there is the difference between the old covenant and the new – where by the law and prophets were proclaimed. Thus it was in the Old Testament that only a few who had the ability to hear directly from God had the authority to proclaim those words. The new covenant differs in that all have access and can enter into a direct relationship with God. The barriers have been broken and all authority and power have been restored to those who are followers – thus imitators – of Jesus.

The final cast is Pentecost where the Spirit was no longer separate from all but a few but is now readily available to those who choose to follow. The indwelling of the Spirit is the complete re-establishment of authority and power to bring about the complete and full kingdom of God as demonstrated in power and glory. The gospel can be fully preached and demonstrated. Its witness is not just mere words but backed by actions and deeds. To leave any one element out of this is to deny the complete and full message of Jesus, and the original creation as it was intended and redeemed. You cannot have one without the other unless by foolish choice you ignore it. It is in the fullness of the gospel that the kingdom of God exists and can break forth into the reality of existence.

<sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

This then is prime directive. It is the re-commissioning of the Genesis commissioning. It is the duplication of the kingdom, in power and in the fullness of the

identity of the Creator. It is the fullness of the redemptive act. It is also the clear implication that this is not to end until the eschatological *Parousia*. This then is the completion of the cycle. It is the reiteration of Genesis 1 with the original commissioning, purpose, and image of humanity.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." <sup>29</sup> God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. (Genesis 1:26-31)

There is only one aspect that has yet to be spoken of that puts back the complete identity of humanity. The original breath – the *Ruark* – the wind and/or breath of God that hovered over the waters of the earth and was breathed into Adam in Genesis 2:7 “then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.” Thus it is that humanity is no longer separated from God. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)” This then is the completed mission – to bring about the entirety of creation into the fullness of the kingdom of God, in the power of God, and in the Image of God.

### In the Beginning

It all starts within the text of Genesis.

Humanity's portion or responsibility within the creation story is to be given and to take dominion over the created. One of those responsibilities involves the naming of the items of creation. Within the Hebrew and ancient understanding, to name something is to be given power over it. Thus the concept that Yahweh is never spoken out of the realization that we have no dominion over the Creator but He has dominion over us. To utter His name is the height of arrogance and blasphemy. Thus it is the realization that we are the created not the creator. But at the same time we must realize in our sharing in the creation process we have been given certain rights and privileges. A part of those rights and privileges is that we are made in the image and likeness of God. We then have a portion and an aspect of the creative effort. Although we are not God we can by imitation become involved in the process to call forth items into being that had not been there in quite the same form as before form as before.

You must consider the elements with the text that set up the pattern. One of the predominant ones is Genesis 1:14 with the word sign. Its occurrences are some eighty-four instances with the most common use being used in reference to miraculous signs. It is usually tagged with the word wonder. Immediately just from word studies there emerges the concept that will later tie into what we call the New Testament. Signs and wonders are a part of the entirety of creation.

Next within the text of Genesis 1:18 is the word saw which has the use in the prophetic as one who sees or has direct knowledge from God. God saw that creation was good and that humanity was very good. The act of seeing is to see what the Father was,

is, and will be doing and that is what the definition of the prophetic is. This is the establishment of the concept of the relational; One that speaks and one that is spoken to, One that creates what is to be seen, sees that creation and passes on as the created to be seen as a witness of the Creator.

Significant in all of this is the creation of humanity. Humanity is made in the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*). The original construct of humanity is a reflection – an imitation of God. Humanity was given the capacity to act as an agent of God to have dominion and to subdue. It is a communal situation represented in the making of humanity in tandem, male and female - not one superior to the other but one equal to as the reflection of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The blurring of that image was a part of the fall of humanity – but it wasn't the annihilation of the image, it was the distortion. It was one that was to be redeemable, restorable, and re-empowered to establish the kingdom of God (*basileia tou Theou*) on earth as it was in heaven. Redemption is the pattern. Complete redemption is the goal. It is a process. Biblically it is a process. Factually it is a process. Spiritually it is a process. We must therefore reconstruct the teaching of the first three chapters of Genesis to reflect the entirety of the gospel – an action that started in the past, is continuing now, and will be finished at some point in the future.

Incrementally there are things that are to occur.

<sup>NAU</sup> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; <sup>2</sup> To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup> To grant those who mourn *in* Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So

they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. <sup>4</sup> Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. (Isaiah 61:1-4)

This is an elemental prophetic statement of the purpose of the Messiah as to what the ministry and purpose was to be upon the earth. It is the basis of the messianic movement and would be the claim of anyone who would fill that regiment and requirement. It should be noted here that the time line or limitation is not a particular time but until such time as the mission is fulfilled in all people – either in accepting or rejecting what it is that is to be done.

<sup>28</sup> Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. <sup>29</sup> Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. (Joel 2:28-29)

Here we have the beginning to the promise of redemption that will eventually be re-iterated as a part of the witness of Acts. Peter restates the testimony of the redemption and empowerment to re-establish the *imago Dei* (image of God) and the *dynamis Theou* (power of God) which is the original intent of creation.

The Old Testament carries with it not only an agreement with a set grouping of people as to the who, what, when, where and why the Messiah was to come but; it also promises to the entirety of humanity that redemption and restoration of the original purposes and promises of creation were, are now, and will take place in the future. The communication between humanity and the Creator never ceased – the forms and terms to which they occurred. Until salvation could take place, the complete restoration would be worked out. This will be the introduction of the concept of the New Testament.



And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. 17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 18 "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, 19 TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." (Luke 4:14-19)

Here we clearly see that Jesus brings forth and claims as his own the mantle of one who is called to the messianic mission. The inference here is clear. Again this is not a limitation but a dedication to the continuance of the favor of God. As long as the gospel is proclaimed, therefore, the rest is enforced.

<sup>NAU</sup> 1 And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. <sup>2</sup> And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. <sup>3</sup> And He said to them, "Take nothing for *your* journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not *even* have two tunics apiece. <sup>4</sup> "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. <sup>5</sup> "And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>6</sup> Departing, they *began* going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. (Luke 9:1-6)

This is where Jesus sets forth the methodology of replication of the missional aspect. Jesus passes on – imparts – the authority and power to reproduce the Isaiah 61/Luke 4 anointing. With this, Jesus is resetting the clock backward in redemption of the Adamic creation putting it back as it was intended. This was recaptured authority and power that was brought forth not only in the birth of Jesus, but with the empowerment by the Holy Spirit. With this it becomes the proclamation of the gospel – thus the good news, death, resurrection and the events of Pentecost. It insures that this pattern is not

only present in the time of Jesus but that it can and will be replicable in the time to come until the final return and complete re-establishment of the kingdom of God.

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. (Matthew 10:1-8)

The inference here is clear as to what that authority contained. Not only was it proclamation of mere words but was followed, endorsed and witnessed in actions and deeds. The course of events began with a training period within the familial but then expanded even beyond that in the final phase. It is a re-gifting to the fullness of the identity, value and purpose of humanity. It is the Rabbinic methodology that it is being done. It is the ability to replicate in full power and exercising of the authority that the mission is being accomplished in that time, in this time and the time to come.

<sup>14</sup> "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

The methodology of preaching was not in just the proclamation of words as the Cessationist would have you believe but rather as witnessed through discernible, replicable actions and deeds. It was the duty of a student to mimic, to imitate what their teacher did, and said. To them this was the completed method. It was not a matter of one but a both/and approach. It was the re-establishment of what it means to be made in the

image and likeness of God. Image, imitation, and likeness are all active ingredients. They are actions not just verbalization of information. They are transformational. Even within the axioms of our time – actions speak louder than words.

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

This then is the commissioning – the end of boot camp where your full assignment is given. Through complete imitation of the teacher and impartation from the teacher, the student is given complete authority and power to act in the stead of the teacher. This is the re-establishment of the original command to humanity. It is the redemption of the full intention of creation. It is the reclamation of the complete image of God but not yet the completed image of God. We are still talking of the future perfect tense – started in the past, going on now, and to be completed in the future.

<sup>16</sup> "The Law and the Prophets *were proclaimed* until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. (Luke 16:16)

Here we have the witness that there is the difference between the old covenant and the new – where by the law and prophets were proclaimed. Thus it was in the Old Testament that only a few who had the ability to hear directly from God had the authority to proclaim those words. This was not by design but by humanities choice. The new covenant differs in that all have access and can enter into a direct relationship with God. The barriers have been broken and all authority and power have been restored to those who are followers – thus imitators – of Jesus.

The final activation is at Pentecost where the Spirit was no longer separate from all but a few but is now readily available to those who choose to follow. The indwelling of the Spirit is the complete re-establishment of authority and power to bring about the complete and full kingdom of God as demonstrated in power and glory. The gospel can be fully preached and demonstrated. Its witness is not just words (*sola scriptura*) but backed by power, actions and deeds. To leave any one element out of this is to deny the complete and full message of Jesus and the original creation as it was intended and as redeemed. You cannot have one without the other unless by foolish choice you ignore it. It is in the fullness of the gospel that the kingdom of God exists and can break forth into the reality of our existence.

<sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

This then is prime directive. It is the re-commissioning of the Genesis commissioning. It is the duplication of the kingdom, in power and in the fullness of the identity of the Creator. It is the fullness of the redemptive act. It is also the clear implication that this is not to end until the eschatological *parousia*. This then is the completion of the cycle. It is the reiteration of Genesis 1 with the original commissioning, purpose, and image of humanity.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over

every living thing that moves upon the earth." <sup>29</sup> God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. (Genesis 1:26-31)

There is only one aspect that has yet to be spoken of that puts back the complete identity of humanity. The original breath – the *Ruark* – the wind and/or breath of God that hovered over the waters of the earth and was breathed into Adam in Genesis 2:7 then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.” Thus it is that humanity is no longer separated from God.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

This then is the completed mission – to bring about the entirety of creation into the fullness of the kingdom of God, in the power of God, and in the Image of God.

It is the purpose of all of creation to point to that which has made it. We can and do see the thumb print of the Creator in the pounding waves, laughter of children, the sky above and the caring of another person. God is not His creation but is present in the fact of His creation. We do not worship the creation but the Creator. So it is with art – we as artists are not the true Creator we are but mere reflections of the process of being the Creator. We have been given unique gifts and talents so that we can illuminate that which is truth from that which is broken. We are not the perfect but the ones who are being perfected.

We must be also careful to remember that in a fallen world the tools which we use are flawed. A flawed and broken tool will not and cannot produce nor truly reflect the complete truth which is the Creator. We are made in the image and likeness of - we are not the Creator, we are the created. We cannot reflect the true and complete image of God, the *Imago Dei* singly until the process is completed communally.

As a part of that reflection we must assume the image and likeness of Jesus. In that image is the understanding that Jesus, in the Gospel of John was present and functioning as a part of the Creator at the beginning of creation. In that reflection and image we understand that Jesus is the light of the world and understands Himself to be the wisdom of God, and the son of man. Through His incarnation we have regained through His sacrifice and resurrection the rights to be in relationship with the Father as He is in relationship to the Father if we accept Him as Lord and Savior.

As we do so we then can become living temples where by the Holy Spirit enables us through His gifting not to be reflections of our humanity but reflections of the relationship that the Father has with the Son and the Son has with the Spirit and each in relationship to the other. We therefore become once more a part of that relationship no longer destined to live apart from and condemned to die a part from but to live with and share in life eternal.

#### SCRIPTURE TO BE USED

- Genesis 1:1 through 4:26 - *Imago Dei* (Image of God), *dynamis Theo* (Power of God), *Basileis Tou Theo* (Kingdom of God)
- Numbers 11:29 - Prophecy - Hearing the word of God
- Proverbs 29 Vision - Hearing the word of God and the law (the written word) - relational
- Isaiah 59:21- The Spirit of God Upon them and prophetic utterance for all generations

- Isaiah 61- The good news of deliverance, The Spirit of the Lord upon them
- Joel 2:28-30 - The Spirit of God, prophesy, dreams and visions
- Matthew 10 - Authority and healing, mission, persecution, division, fear of the Lord, reward
- Matthew 28 - The great commission
- John 1:29/Mark 1:7 - Proclamation of the coming of the Spirit
- Mark 1:24 - Even the demonic recognizes the authority of Jesus.
- Mark 1:38, Luke 4:43, Luke 13:32 - Jesus' proclamation of his mission – the kingdom of God.
- Mark 10:45 - Service
- Matthew 9:35 - Teaching and announcing the good news of the Kingdom and healing (Repeated in Matthew 4:23)
- Matthew 10:7 /Luke 9:11 /Luke 10:9 - Announce the Kingdom of Heaven is near: heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.
- Matthew 12:28//Luke 11:20 - Demonstration of the Spirit upon the believer
- Matthew 28: 17-20 - Directive
- Mark 3:14-15 - He appointed twelve
- Mark 6:1- 6 - Limitation through rejection
- John 6:28-29 – God's work requires belief in Jesus
- John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."
- Acts 1:8 - Will receive the Holy Spirit and become a witness
- Acts 9:17 - Impartation, healing and the Holy Spirit
- Acts 10:36 - Preaching good news of peace, anointing from the Holy Spirit with power, doing good and healing for God was with him
- Acts 26:16 - Anointing to serve and testify
- James 1: 19 -27 Hearers and doers of the word
- 1 Peter 1:5 - Faith and power (*en dunamei*) until (*eis*) a salvation at the last time.
- 1 Peter 4:7-12 - The end being near one should use their spiritual gifts to serve
- 1 John 2:26-28 - As an antidote to false prophets, and an encouragement to use the gift of prophecy. This passage is strikingly parallel to the promise of the *Paraclete* to the apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13f).
- I John 3:8- The son of God's purpose is to destroy the works of the devil
- Jude 18-21- Edification through praying in the Spirit = praying in response to the direct leading of the Spirit- a revelatory process

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **INTEGRATION**

#### **Conjunction of Theoretical and Practical**

Within the Context, there is one overriding element that is typical no matter the age demographic. This characteristic runs deeper within gender definitions in that the prospects of the female gender are greatly limited not only educationally but economically and sociologically as well. Most of these patterns come from an ultra-conservative expression of familial patterning and generational imprinting. These all play significant roles in the most important aspect of the individual – identity.

What you are in this lineage is what you do. You are defined not only in gender specific roles but historical patterning of what that looks like. The economic sociological construct with limited prospect of employment possibilities further limits identity within the area and may very well contribute to patterns of substance, personal, and sexual abuse. The need to block the overwhelming sense of hopelessness, helplessness, and meaninglessness all serve to perpetuate patterns of abuse in one form or another – familial, institutional, sociological. Services are limited and hard to obtain. Internet access is limited or nonexistent. Economic opportunities are stymied. Public transportation is nonexistent. Self-reliance is the mantra although generations rely upon



public assistance of one type or another – child care, food stamps, welfare, SSI, disability payments, etc. Although they rail against entitlement programs politically, they are the first in line to get their piece of the pie.

Those who do not fit within the accepted sociological patterns are unwelcome and leave the area as soon as they can to seek other opportunities. The stagnation of the population growth is reflective of this. The ultra-conservative Old-Amish orders and Mennonites are moving into this rural community because of the availability of inexpensive farming land and the isolation and intrusion of modern society is at a minimum in the county. Diversity is not a part of the culture. It is shunned, unwanted, and unwelcomed. All of this continues the pattern of the closed ended society.

Religion plays a definite divisive role in the majority of the area. Many churches are “family owned and operated” generational foundations that hold fast and steady to hard-core sociological construct based upon ultra-conservative values of past eras. Race and gender equality are issues that have gained little if any ground within these areas where stereotypes are prevalent. This is a predominantly and almost exclusively a white low income enclave that functions by relying heavily upon nepotism and family connection. Cessasionist theology is prevalent in the area but not directly in the context of where this program is based. Word of Faith is the foundational aspect of theological trends within the context with tinges of Charismatic/Pentecostalism.

Charismatic and Pentecostal church influence is at a minimum in the area and are for the most part viewed with suspicion. They have made some inroads but do not have continued and stayed influence upon any church gathering outside of one or two denominational churches. Modern worship patterns are limited. Churches fostering this style and trend are often referred to as those rock and roll churches.

The fear of getting too large seems to guide what influence is allowed. This is part of the suspicion of federal and state government with a dose of large corporation indifference to the economics of the area. All of these entities have promised much and delivered little. To put it in the context an old truism, they have all come with “hands full of gimme and mouths full of much obliged”. Corporations have come quickly and moved on just as quickly leaving higher unemployment and resentment in their wake. Most employment opportunities are low pay and part time. This area was part of the rust and wood belt.

Revival is asked for but is mired in the tent revival paradigm masquerading as church growth. It is a throwback to the Calvinist model of getting them saved accounting systems of heavenly reward. The more you save the bigger your heavenly mansion. Discipleship is used as another buzz word for Sunday school/class attendance.

Because of the lack of economic opportunity the prosperity gospel holds sway and credibility amongst many who live in the community. This reflects the Calvin based theology of accumulation of rewards as proof of salvation which is institutionalized in many of the established churches. It is also a referral to Old Testament ideas of a lack of health, wealth and prosperity as punishment for sins (something that is dealt with on several occasions by Jesus as not the case). Therefore it is believed that if you are a true

believer you should have all of these things as proof of you being saved. Leadership models are predominantly male dominant and top down interactions. I am the pastor, you are not. I hear from God and you do not. Therefore you must obey the pastor as the final authority is the modality of keeping things under control and congregations in their place.

Governmental and emergency services are at a minimum and fractional at best. Police presence is nominal to non-existence. It is surprising that more of a libertarian form of political philosophy is not the rule of the day. This however is not the case as they are very law and order oriented and this falls into their religious practices and beliefs. Gun ownership, hunting, and fishing are largely a part of the culture and hotly defended as the American way of life and second amendment guaranteed. The NRA is almost a religion in this area.

With this type of background it seems that it may be an insurmountable task to introduce the complete concept of the personal identity being the *imago Dei* (image of God), ability to do and achieve the purposes and plans of God through *dynamis Theo* (power of God), and the introduction of the will of God in the breaking forth of the *bassileia tou Theo* (kingdom of God). They are not necessarily open to the teaching as they have certain prejudices to what they term new. It is the old mantra that “we have never done it before” with the added of “and we never will” that holds much back. The song lyric “give me that old time religion - it’s good enough for me” can be considered dogma carved in stone and used to beat to death anything or anyone that would challenge it.

Within the context, previous attempts had limited success and were confounded by incomplete biblical teaching. They were largely based on brief demonstration formats and forced marches. It was more of thrill seeking sessions of “look how I can get wrecked in the spirit” rather than a full pursuit of God. It was a program not a lifestyle implementation. It was a momentary distraction of the supposed reality of everyday existence. At best it has a “been there done that and have the t-shirt what do you have next for me to experience.” It is also a part of the mindset that religion is a Sunday kind of thing and only infiltrates the week when it becomes a personal confrontation.

Religion only enters the work week if it becomes an ethical issue or question that involves someone else’s behavior toward that individual. Part of the mindset may also have been the result of our instant mashed potato, and microwave existences of immediate gratification to a momentary distraction. It is also an outcropping of the Greek and Gnostic separation of the spiritual and the physical. What needs to happen is a full scale show and tell discipleship model development as demonstrated by Jesus and/or a full blown encounter with God to counter this philosophical/religious/cultural mindset.

Identity seems to be the key ingredient. Identity within modern Western influenced society is based on not who you actually are but on rather what you do. Identity is not tied specifically to familial constructs (although it is a major source) or on imitation of some aspect of society but is largely based on what you do. This also shapes familial relationships. What that looks like is your identity and position within a family is directly tied to the amount of income and things you can bring in. If you are unable or

limited in the ability to bring in things, your value to the family is in jeopardy. You are judged on what you can bring rather than who you truly are. It ramps up the identity crisis in that it takes up every aspect of who you are, what you do and adds to it: you are also what you consume.

The main example is to watch modern advertising that makes the cases for this type of identity assimilation. There the typical individual is shown to be lacking in identity because of something they do not have. This lack is translated into the possibility of if only. It is seen by the conspicuous consumption of items that are seen to be part of the rights of belonging to this society and the dreams that it fosters. Cell phones, cars and clothing are but the tip of the iceberg if you are to be a part of the identity called the American Dream. You are what you consume. That consumption is dictated by the latest and greatest which is not governed by longevity, ethical or moral character of the individual or the society. It is the assumption of identity by consumption. There are people who have the latest smart phone, wear designer labels on their backs but live in the most sordid conditions with a 50 inch flat screen TV with cable. They may not have enough money to pay their bills or purchase food but they have their entitled piece of the pie and what it means to be an American. They can then be assured of their value and identity. Take away that ability and you have removed their identity and value. To borrow a phrase that I first heard from Tony Campolo, we suffer from affluenza. It is a society of instant gratifications rather than progression toward perfection.

Control the identity of the individual and you control the entirety of the society in which that individual participates. This has been a political fact of life through the ages. It can be attested to in some of the worst and best political movements. Central to this is the

Roman conception of the idea of bread and circus. Distraction and distortion are the main tools and ingredients of this deception. This has been biblically attested to since the Adamic saga of the fall. The construct is the deception of image. Distort the image and you confuse the issue. The distortion of image was a confabulation of Lucifer. The manipulation of the words and intents of the original instructions, image, and enablement of the Creator caused the distortion of the image to take place. It was a logical approach which reconfigured the identity equation from a to be, to do, to have; towards a to do, to have, to be or to have, to do, to be.

That is what the church has done with its constant emphasis upon a cross and salvation centric message. If I work to be saved, I can have heavenly rewards, and then I will be a son or daughter of God. It is a works generated theology. You work for your salvation by performance and it is proved by accumulation of “blessings”. Protestants may call it saved by grace but you have to follow the Roman Road and perform a particular ritual, say the right words and yes be baptized before the rest can happen. Salvation is a gift and all that needs to be done is to say thank you.

This Protestant system ignores the gifting and enablement that comes with the true identity in the *imago Dei* (image of God) which produces the fruits of the Spirit and not just consumable artifacts to prove ones salvation. It does not take the full consideration of the entire plan of redemption. It leaves out the true identity of individual as the image of God which gives them ability to do and thus to have. It has been an escape from Rome and yet they are still hoping to achieve it. Catholic doctrine is just another format of this impossible task of working out your salvation. It is all a series of if

only events that if I please God by some performance or act I can get into the kingdom.

The only thing we need to do is accept the gift and then assume the identity.

The image of God (*imago Dei*) consists of the root word that means to imitate. The imitation is none other than being what we would first learn about in Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. Specific in this discussion is the elements found within Genesis 1:26 – 31. The entire programmatic entity of Jesus' existence followed the pattern of imitation of what it was the Father was doing. Jesus was imitating the Father and because he was about the Father's business (Luke 2:49) what he was, is what he did. He could only do what the Father was doing because his identity was linked directly to the image of the Father. If you saw Jesus, you saw the Father. (John 5:19-47)

The *imago Dei* is the key element within any true dynamic. (Genesis 1:26-31, John 14:6 - 16:1) It continues within that context with being given (gifted) dominion and thus the power (*dynamis*) to act upon the whole of creation as outlined in Genesis 1: 27-31. The fact is that if we are to start at any point within the discussion of any individual or for that matter anything, we must first speak of its identity. It is within that identity that the individual finds meaning, value and purpose with the power and ability to act. Without it there is a tendency to take on or try varied false identities looking to find ones meaning in life, what value one has and what the purpose of life is. It leads to misplaced action and wielding of power. You are not your job, political affiliation, economic standing, gender, sexual orientation, race, or creed. Simply you are the image of God. Given the communality of identity of which we are; it runs counter to the cultural aspect of meaning, value and purpose. Culture makes it increasingly easy to obtain, gain, and maintain the wrong image and likeness through you are what you consume and own.

What must be further implemented in any teaching praxis is the elemental key of the Christian life; the imitation of Christ that is to take place. Within that imitation is the capacity of true individual enlightenment and the ability to clearly see beyond the confines of the human heart to that of the Father's heart. It is the ability to know. In this is our chief concern of existence: the meditation of the life of Christ, the imitation and the action through the empowerment (grace) provided. This is not a B-movie emotionless portrayal but an active integration of our existence to influence those spheres of gifting to which we have been given.

Within the fullness of the *imago Dei*, we have adopted and adapted the message. The problem is that churches did this not necessarily to make it culturally relevant (relevancy has never really been an issue as the identity message is always relevant) but to make it culturally acceptable until it was passed along to the present times. What this does is eliminates aspects of the full gospel message. It has been the almost exclusive teaching of Paul's theology in the context of the cross and Roman Road. Churches have become little more than salvation stations whose sole principal and interest is replicating the saved rather than the *imago Dei*. This is a not uniquely a Protestant issue that in its haste to disassociate itself from the Medieval Catholic Church, it took up preaching Paul as the gospel and Jesus as the epistle to Paul. It has become the imitation of Paul rather than the *imago Dei*.

The gospel of Paul is continually preached from pulpits and most certainly from the context. Teachings are rarely focused upon the synoptic or John's gospel. Those are only referred to as supportive documentation of Paul's theological treatise. This is an historical issue dating back to the times of Luther and Calvin spurred on in their rush to



disassociate themselves from the Catholic Church. Luther's attitude was that the gospels could be generally ignored in favor of Paul's theology with a smattering of the use of John's gospel because it has the least amount of miracle references. The problem with this approach is that you eventually become like the object that you are trying to separate yourself from. Simply put what you do not like or hate in others is exactly what you do not like or hate in yourself. The railing against the mystical and philosophical emphasis turned exactly into the adaptation of the same branding under the guise of *sola scriptura* and *sola fidelia*. Add to it the denial of miracles, signs and wonders. It is wrongly justified with the philosophical argument that we do not need this type of authentication in that we have the complete word of God encapsulated in scripture. This mirrors the halakah of Judaism which states that God gave us the scriptures and humanity the right to interpret it, so God has nothing more to say.

The Reformation represents a power struggle more than it does an overall theological revolution. What I mean by this is simply it was an orchestrated rebellion of the abuses of the hierarchy of an organization and their particular emphasis. It was a legitimate proposition but it soon turned from being about reform to political power struggles. It was a control issue of *sola scriptura* versus doctrine and whether by grace or action you are saved. These are control issues of power structures and those who hold them. They are semantic arguments. To prove their points, reformers on both sides went to extremes to score points. These are the leftovers of the imposition of a hierarchal structure of Roman rule. Calvin added to the argument with the inclusion of a work ethic that measured your level of being saved by the amount of accrued blessings of material goods. They argued over baptism rites and communion forms. These nuances have little

to do with the day to day existence of believers outside of the political structures of church and state under which they live. They have little to do with the actual practical ministry. They have little or nothing to do with the kingdom of God, the Isaiah 61/Luke 4 declarative mission statement, or the Matthew 28: 17-20 directives.

The liberations that did take place were short lived. The question that has yet to be asked is why? The answer is because the core basic element that alters the complete picture has been ignored and confused. The why is a simple factor that you must go back to the beginning to affect the future. To put it in terms of the linguistically charged terminologies that is a future perfect tense issue.

The reintroduction of Jesus as the redeemed image of humanity as the *imago Dei* is absolutely critical to reestablishing the full redemption message of the gospel as outlined in the Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:14-19 pericopes. The Spirit of God being placed upon Jesus is recovering the mantle of humanity that had been removed during the fall – thus the inference to the nakedness of humanity. It is the re-empowering of to alter, adapt, free, and create acting as the Father would act. The entirety of the periscopes is set within a linguistically future perfect tense. Jesus states that a process has begun. He had been anointed which was something that had started at a point of time in the past. The process now is in action because part of that anointing is to be empowered to act. That act linguistically is to do which is a process that is taking place in the now. These then are actions that had been started in the past, are going on now, and will be completed at some time in the future eschatological *parousia*.

Jesus speaks of the *basileia tou Theo* (the kingdom of God) as entering into it placing stress on the ethical prerequisites involved in their approach. Jesus' entering into the kingdom speaks of the process of making the kingdom apparent in the now, developing it as it goes and completing it as a future action. In the sense of a linguistic statement it would be considered to be in the future perfect tense as well. Again it was an action that was started in the past, is continuing and being acted upon in the present, and will be completed sometime in the future. The conclusion is that *basileia* in the now definition is the "in-breaking of God's dynamic saving power or reign, which can affect the whole person." The very word in-breaking is a process oriented word again as a future perfect linguistic indicator.

There is another point of significance that takes place by the *dynamis Theou* (power of God) that comes upon them. The demonstration of the power of God is central to the full message of the Gospel as discussed in Jon Ruthven's *What Is Wrong with Protestant Theology?*<sup>1</sup> It is clarified under the text of John 3: 3, 5 where Jesus links birth by the Spirit and entering into the kingdom of God.

What does this all mean? Basically the power of God is displayed within the now. The aspect of miracles, signs and wonders is not a debate at this point nor should it be. Although they are not common within western based churches they should be. The only reason that they are not is because of the refusal to admit them as a regular fact of kingdom living and imitation of Jesus as the *imago Dei*. It is the continued concept of philosophical thinking that separates the spiritual (as the good) from the physical (as the

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<sup>1</sup> Jon Mark Ruthven, *What's Wrong with Protestant Theology? Tradition Vs. Biblical Emphasis* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2013), 1.

evil) that puts a stop to full kingdom living. It is the practice of Christian thought that wrongly teaches that once you are saved, you are to wait for your reward in a future time. It is a future based practice of delaying the kingdom in the now which is completely and utterly anti-biblical in premise. Jesus specifically states that the kingdom of God is at hand. If all the literal scholars are to follow their own thought patterns in analysis, they must conclude that this statement clearly means it is reachable in the now.

The arrival of the kingdom of God is the re-establishing on earth as it is in heaven, the *imago Dei* (image of God), and the *dynamis Theo* (power of God). What is delayed is the full manifestation of the kingdom of God (*basileia tou Theou*) which is to completely come with the *parousia* – the second coming of Christ. Jesus' point is a continual advancement as scripted from Genesis – taking dominion, subduing the earth, and being fruitful and multiplying. The significance is in what Jesus demonstrated within his ministry. Jesus fully comprehends that the *Basileia tou Theou* in his ministry represents a redemptive action and a healing activity as witnessed in both Matthew 11: 2-19 and Luke 7: 18-35 within the now. This is not to say that the fullness of its presence is within the now rather just the opposite that the power can and is being demonstrated now and is progressively exponentially occurring as witnessed by Jesus' statement in greater works will you do. The message of Jesus then revolves around the demonstrable power now, the redeemed identity at present (Luke 15:11-32) and the fullness of the kingdom/dominion progressively later but still in evidence within the now. In Luke 15: 11-32 the demonstration of restored identity is powerfully evident. The prodigal father – not the son – demonstrates the now in the restoration of the identity of the lost even as they are not yet fully restored. It is an unconditional return to former placement with the

Father's kingdom – despite the present condition of the one returning. Therefore it is a process but one that empowers the individual to act as inheritors within the now but goes forward in rebuilding in the now and in the future.

Pauline emphasis becomes increasingly vast as the timing of the *parousia* is moved from the soon to a future manifestation. This shift necessitates a change in the message. This shift places undo emphasis on the *parousia* to the point that the church is no longer relevant because it displays nothing in the now. We have lost generations in waiting for things as prescribed in such books as *The Late Great Planet Earth*<sup>2</sup> which has an entirely apocalyptic message. The advice is to head for the hills because it is all going to hell in a hand basket and wait for Jesus to clean up the mess. It eliminates preaching the gospel to the poor, to proclaiming release to the captives, and recovering sight to the blind, freeing those who are oppressed, and proclaiming the favorable year of the Lord. It lacks hope in the now, and power in the now. This is not the gospel or the good news. This is the Fox News.

Paul's predominance among the western evangelicals has negatively shaped the theological conversations with an over emphasis of the eschatological and apocalyptic. In contrast the writings of the other apostles are veritable synoptic repeats of the full gospel message of Jesus; a consistent message of the Rabbi under whom they have become the *imago Dei*. Paul on the other hand establishes a discourse based teaching method to match the Greek influenced philosophical culture to which he serves. The modality of that teaching is the suffering Christ, whom we have been crucified with, having died to

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<sup>2</sup> Hal Lindsey and Carole C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1977: Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI),

ourselves, and who await the coming of the fullness of dominion/kingdom in an eschatological/apocryphal victory. The emphasis for Paul is on the informational not the transformational, at least with the text that we have.

The need in the immediate context is to turn the emphasis of Pauline philosophical informational theology to one of Jesus' entering into the kingdom in the now. Part of the process would be to assume the full identity of the redeemed image of man. That redeemed image of man is the image of God in the demonstrated power of the kingdom, not only as information to be taught but as transformational demonstrations of the *Basileia tou Theou*. This brings us to the basis of a discipleship model.

The basis for discipleship is a social contract between two or more individuals having at its core a hierarchy of relationship. That relationship is that of a superior (in the sense of one that has been through the process, can teach, model and demonstrate it) and a subordinate(s) (those entering into the process who will then replicate what they have been given) and is to be called a "discipleship community." Here the individuals involved in the community interact according the established role. This is the establishment of what a church should really look like. It should be a center for a discipleship community based upon teaching, enabling, empowering, worshiping, bringing in and sending out. It is a reconstruction of the parent-child relationship within the context of an educational system for the transmittal of the image of God (*imago Dei*), power of God (*dynamis Theo*) and the kingdom of God (*basileia tou Theou*) culture. The community does take on all of the responsibilities of that structure in how the individuals relate to one another. Thus the teacher takes upon the role of mother and/or father and the students takes the role of brothers and sisters. (You can find this often in Jesus' speech patterns of how he

refers to the disciples.) This relational interaction is the intensification of communal interplay between functions of education and family and is a return to childhood to be reformed/transformed as a human being into the image of God (*imago Dei*). In the discipleship structure that transformative response is for the disciple to fully embody the teacher's/master's achievements. The ultimate teacher is Jesus in that he fully re-created the image in total of the teacher/master which is God.

There are other important distinctions between the traditional education methodologies and that of discipleship. The school's function in traditional education is mainly to transmit knowledge so that a pupil may become functional participants in the religious and/or cultures of their time. This is a *formative* knowledge in that it shapes the basis for the individuals' identity and their ability to creatively participate and contributes to societal structure. This then is the base line for human interaction within the context of that society/religion/culture. Unfortunately this has been the entirety of the church model and differs from discipleship. It does not reflect the fullness of what the discipleship modality should and could be within the context of the true church which is the complete body of Christ, the image of God, in human form and function.

In discipleship, the individual is challenged to recreate, reformulate and transform their basic identity through emulation of the master that is modeled. This then is *transformative* thus creating a new being. You are then transformed from glory to glory. The axiom is that the discipleship community becomes the medium for transformative knowledge, emulated by the master through impartation. The primary goal of the community is proof of the disciples' possession of that transformative knowledge. (It can be verified in the fruits of the Spirit because of the gifts of the Spirit transmitted by the

transformed individual). This entails imitation and/or emulation of the actions, teachings, narratives, etc. of the master. It is an active participation in the demonstration of a community involved in bringing about the kingdom of God (*bassileia tou Theo*) on earth through the power (*dynamis*) and authority given to it to do so. It can then be said that transmission of transformative knowledge is at the very heart of the discipleship community. It is information that converts into transformation through demonstration, participation, and replication.

Historically and theologically you can see within the nine-hundred year span between Augustine and Aquinas how the theology of Christianity became in essence a treatise of philosophy. It moved from a dynamic, interactive, demonstrable, relational community to an intellectual pursuit. It was no longer a discipleship community but an informational unit focused on the moral and ethical dilemmas of the time of its context. Miracles, signs, and wonders were limited to special events and occasions. They were limited to just a few who could meet the criteria of a philosophical transcendence achieved by removing yourself from the context which surrounded humanity at the time. The divide was clearly drawn demarcating the differences between the have and the have not's. I want to make it clear that this is not a condemnation of the pursuit of understanding or trying to explain those things which were demonstrated, revealed and experienced in the earliest time of the Jesus movement. It is not. This is what theology is (and should be). It is the process of trying to make sense of the occurrences of the kingdom breaking in and the disciple walking in it so that the information gained can be used, transferred, and demonstrated and can become transformational. The purpose of theology is to further the causes of discipleship not make intellectuals. The pursuit of



knowledge and the dissemination of information, when removed from application, results in a Cessationist, powerless, and irrelevant identity of the individual and that of the church.

Information is part of a transitional platform. It is a point of departure and not the point of arrival. Information moved to practice becomes transformational. Theology must be able to be demonstrated. Theory must follow practice. The problem with much of Christian theology is that it demonstrates its powerlessness, its inability to affect change of any substantive meaning, its ineffectual ability to set the captives free, and its negation of miracles, signs and wonders. It limits participation in the fullness of the Gospel as taught, practiced, demonstrated, and lived in the person of Jesus plus found within the context of the documentation of scripture.

Within the context that I now participate in (STM), the vestiges of this theology is still to be felt and dealt with. That is simply because of a lack of the true identity in which those in STM are made. They still operate under the Calvinistic identity of commerce in the Protestant work ethic theology. The identity is limited to what you do and how much you produce as proof of your salvation and thus your worth to the community. Roles are clearly delineated along gender stereotypes based upon what is deemed to be gender specific work definitions.

The problem with current theological thought is it is too closely tied to the concept of the fallen Adam and Eve. The current concentration is in Chapter 3 of Genesis (particularly verses 1 through 7). Chapter 2 is treated as the prolog to chapter 3; it sets the stage for the fall. Chapter 1 is limited to the idea that God created the world in a literal and limited period of time and action – nothing more or less to say about it. This places

an undue emphasis on the corruption of humanity. It makes way for the Greek concept of the corruption of the flesh and the elevation of spirit born entities. Removal of any element of humanity (body, mind, and spirit) is to make humanity less than human. It makes the ability of being fully redeemed into the *imago Dei* (image of God) a difficult task at best. God created humanity in God's image and likeness which was deemed male and female – body, mind and spirit. It was a complete package. These things were distorted in the fall not eliminated and not separated. They were equally at the effect of the fall.

The removal of any one element or the equality of any of the elements, has led the church to an identity crisis and a power shortage. It does not take into consideration the established pattern of creation as it appears in the first thirty five verses of the bible. Because of this focus, it is hard to imagine that we, as broken, sinful humans trapped within a corrupted body, mind, and spirit could ever possibly approach the level of the early disciples, apostles or saints. It makes it impossible to capture the spirit of the early church and walk in the power, signs and wonders that it flowed in and became greater than. It is because something is missing from the image. The reflection is completely distorted let alone seen dimly as Paul would have us believe. This then negates the very image of Jesus by limiting the image of humanity to brokenness only and permanently – until the *parousia*. It limits the relationship of God and humanity to one that is Deist (a god no longer active in or reactive to creation). It then places an undue emphasis on the cross and removes the movement beyond Pentecost to an actual proclamation of the good news in word and deed throughout all of creation which was, is and will be its full intent.

## Literature Review

A literature review is a demonstrable accumulation of the researcher/author's knowledge within a particular field inclusive of vocabulary, theories, variables, phenomena, methods and history.<sup>3</sup> There exists little or no topical theological discussions that cover identity and creativity in the fashion that this research project has undertaken. There are within literature resources that discuss creativity and identity pertaining to the corporate world as it relates to the need for fresh ideas for innovation and capitalistic revenue enhancement. The idea of identity and creativity being linked in the Christian context are extremely limited and completely separate entities. Creativity historically within the theological framework has been limited to a divine entity exclusively and it is only within the modern time that any connection has been made. Most creative literature perceives it as divinely inspired but limited thus not a part of the image of God that humanity is made in. This is classically supported in the works of both Augustine and Aquinas. An exhaustive review therefore is impractical. It is only within modern neurological context that the concept of creativity being hardwired into the human brain that most of the elements of human identity as creative can be fully examined. The bibliography sites those books the author has found to support the supposition. There are scattered within various theological texts elements that would support inferences to the author's combination of creativity and identity that are mentioned throughout this study. This is an area that needs much attention, research, and exploration.

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<sup>3</sup>Justus Randolph, "A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review," *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation* 14, no. 13 (2009), (accessed August 3, 2013), 2.  
<http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=14&n=13>.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the methodology of the research involved in this dissertation. We have discussed the ministry focus, established the theological foundations with the integration of the theoretical and practical all to begin to establish praxis of ministry. Methodology is an integral step in the process of praxis as it gives validity, consistency, and ethical basis for examination of the hypothesis giving due diligence throughout the research process. As defined the process involves the hypothetical, discussion of the research design, explanation of the measurement of data and reviewing the instrumentation.

#### **Hypothesis**

How do you become what you are destined to be if you do not know who you are? This is the problem within most modern societies – identity. Identity provides value, meaning and purpose. Modern societies tell you that in order for you to have your identity you must possess or be possessed by something. It is the causation of have. If you have this, you can do this, so that you can be this. The major reason why Christian communities look no different than non-Christian communities is because of a lack of understanding of their true identity. It is not in what they have or what they do that they become something; rather it is that they are created as the image of God. In the

redemptive action of Jesus the image has been fully regenerated in the believer and empowered. The hypothesis is if the believer is presented with their true identity they will be able to see themselves as the image of God. They then will be able to use the power of God to bring about the kingdom of God both in the now and yet to come. This was commanded and modeled by Jesus then demonstrated in Acts.

## Research Design

### Introduction

*“Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted”*

- Albert Einstein

This project is based upon qualitative research methodology. The reasoning behind this choice is it directly relates to aspects of church social conditioning not only as part of social and individual identity; and in that condition willingly accepts Cessationistic theology. “Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.”<sup>1</sup> Systematically the process moves in relation to questions and procedures having occurred within the contextual setting. Once having established the causality for the research it becomes apparent that data must be collected from within that context of ministry. The analysis of that data produces meaning from thematic structures that have become evident and in turn allows for an inductive style finding its focus within individual meaning. This is all within Creswell’s understanding of what it is to do Qualitative Research.

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 4.

There are aspects of this study that will use quantitative research methodology in drawing conclusions based upon percentage response to survey questionnaires and direct interviews with participants. “Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures.”<sup>2</sup> Implicit in that definition is the use of statistical measurement which in standard survey formatting is an elemental byproduct.

All surveyed information gathers statistical information yet it is not the intention of the research to produce statistical information. The information gathered is being used as a basis of validity of continuance of the question of why a congregation looks and acts the way that it does. This would classify the findings as interpretative by nature making it qualitative and not quantitative.

It is often stated that numbers are not always meaningful especially in dealing with social implications.<sup>3</sup> Since the numbers the researcher is dealing with are not significant in nature to have trending implications or being able to use them as conclusive evidence, it is not possible to use quantitative methodology to draw evidential conclusions.

The sampling is not only a small section of church and society but will not allow full use of the quantitative methodology. The survey is not intended to produce statistical information to test theories but rather to analyze how and what said grouping of

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 4

<sup>3</sup> Nouria Brikci and Judith Green, *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology* (Geneva: Switzerland, Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2007), 4.

individuals think within the context of their identities. The premise of this study is to understand aspects of the life of the church and its individuals. The study generates word understanding rather than numerological evidence. Logically then this study is of qualitative nature in understanding and observation of the believer and the church in general.

The final determination of methodology would be to analyze if the study produces both statistical information and understanding of issues and if it could then be labeled as Mixed Methodology Research. “Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks.”<sup>4</sup> In order for that to be a conclusive factor for use of the mixed methodology requires an integration of the two methodologies which produces a more complete understanding of the research that one alone cannot.

Following that line of the intended purpose of the initial postulation, the researcher believes Mixed Methodology would not be of interest or importance. A case could be made for it however in examining the study as a whole. The meager statistical information does not add to the quality of the study. It is simply a demonstration to suggest that there is little or no difference in thought pattern between two groups of people. The statistical information gathered also is of little significance because of sampling size. It only proves that between the two groups that there is a similarity. Inside or outside the contextual walls identity appears to be the same.

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<sup>4</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. 2014), 4.

As part of the design functionality, it could be stated that this is based in grounded theory design. “Grounded theory design is a design of inquiry from sociology in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants.”<sup>5</sup> The project is dependent upon a layered data collection approach involved in its setting up and carrying it out. Grounded theory is integral to qualitative research.

For the purposes of this study and by definition this project then must be determined to be within the Qualitative Methodology.

### Worldview

There are obvious prejudices and presuppositions that the researcher brings to this study based upon experiential evidence and interactions with family, society, and church bodies in general. No study escapes the trappings that social structure and influence has upon the intellectual foundations of any researcher. You see with the eyes of the culture and society in which you inhabit. The key to good research methodology is to admit biases, examine them, and allow that those biases are only a point of departure and not a goal to be obtained. No study will completely eliminate biases from research analysis, interpretations or conclusions. The objective is to allow them to help build a launching point for a better understanding through expansion of the researcher’s limited experience and interactions with faith based communities and the community at large.

From this aspect then one must give deliberation to what philosophical worldview assumptions become apparent in the biases of the researcher. Having noted the tendencies

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 14.



of the researcher and the choice of vehicle in use of the qualitative research methodology; the worldview most cogent with that of the study would be that of the Constructivist Worldview.<sup>6</sup> Creswell defines the constructivist worldview as one where the individual assembles their meanings based upon the world that surrounds them. That world is delineated into elements that are contained in historical and social perspectives as represented as family, society and culture. It is in the environment the individual interacts in those conditions and gains meaning corresponding to the surroundings. In order to ascertain what those things are, the constructivist researcher investigates that surrounding, uses open ended questions to get individuals to share those relevant aspects and then can interpret those findings. The research process is then inductive in generating meaning from the data collected in that context.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the author of this research holds to a basic premise of Christianity as a monotheistic religion based upon the concept of a Trinitarian view of God. In that system of Christian belief, God is revelatory of God's identity in ordinary and extraordinary means. In that revelatory process God is knowable and is love. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent and has existed beyond the confines of space and time. It has been God's design to create humanity in God's image and likeness with the permissive command of free will. Through the fall it is the understanding of humanity that creation is divided into natural and supernatural worlds where in God no such division exists. Therefore, because of humanity's corrupted understanding, the fullness of the kingdom of God is limited. It is only through the redemptive and restorative action of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Jesus that humanity can gain the fullness of the kingdom of God both now and in the not yet by Christ's example and demonstration.

### Validity and Triangulation

According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, valid is "1: having legal efficacy or force; *especially*: executed with the proper legal authority and formalities 2 *a*: well-grounded or justifiable : being at once relevant and meaningful, *b*: logically correct 3: appropriate to the end in view : effective"<sup>8</sup> Validity then is a property of being valid. What does that mean? It becomes a circular argument. Put in proper perspective it is the process of a stepwise, logical approach that takes into consideration the biases of not only the researcher and the culture of said, but also being able to check for accuracy and credibility of the findings. It infers consistency across the entirety of the process of the whole. It is assumptive in nature. However validity of a study can only be determined fully in the outcome of research and in its ability to be reproducible in the context by another researcher.

Does that then mean the research is reproducible in another context? The answer would be dependent upon the contextual element being of an equivalent nature. The assumptive then would be an affirmative. However, this is not generally the case when looking at cultural conditions. Although cultures may have similarities they are different because of differences in the personal "I" experience. This is a given in detective work as a whole. Case studies of witnesses within classrooms and real world conditions have proven time and time again that only in gathering of all the experiences of all the

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<sup>8</sup> Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003), 1381.

witnesses does there emerge a close proximity of the actual occurrence. Total agreement of people who have witnessed the same event, at the same time, in approximately the same place is a rarity. There is the anomaly of divergent and contradictory information concerning the same event. It is how each individual perceives what has happened and has fully processed it.<sup>9</sup>

Validity then is determined in this research project by “the strengths of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account.”<sup>10</sup> There are limitations to all validity claims. Within each context these limitations become apparent because people groups cannot express the fullness of all people asked the same sets of questions. Within the context of the researcher, we are dealing with the limitations of a population of an area that is predominantly white and protestant in makeup. The context is again limited in that it consists of inter-related families. The percentages of those who are not related are statistically insignificant. It is only through the inclusion of survey material from other states could the premise of the hypothesis be examined. It is only in the active seeking of other racial profiles could the hypothesis be examined to be valid across the spectrum. Although the context has Pentecostal/Charismatic tendencies it has a highly developed and predominate Word of Faith theology. This again leads to an

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara Tversky and George Fisher, “The Problem with Eyewitness Testimony” (presented at the Stanford Law School, sponsored by the Stanford Journal of Legal Studies, Stanford, CA, April 5, 1999. (accessed September 5, 2013) <http://agora.stanford.edu/sjls/Issue%20One/fisher&tversky.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 201.

unusual intertwined theological basis that is not representative of not only the area but across the Christian spectrum. It is of itself a hybrid.

This presents unique indicators that are likely to eschew resulting observations. Creswell does have a system whereby the accuracy of the information interpreted can be measured. They are:

- Triangulate different data sources of information
- Use of member checking to determine the accuracy of the findings
- Use of rich, thick description to convey the findings
- Clarify the bias
- Present negative or discrepant information
- Spend prolonged time in the field (context)
- Use peer debriefing
- Use an external auditor <sup>11</sup>

Arguably this is a system of checks and balances to insure that all manner of procedures are controlled under the same determinations and scrutiny to help to insure that the data is fairly and accurately reported. To ensure the reliability of the project, meticulous records of all interview and group discussions and detailed documentation of

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<sup>11</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 201-203

the process of analysis will need to be done.<sup>12</sup> Transparency is a critical key in all these matters. Validity is a qualifying component of the trustworthiness of not only the data but the individual collecting, analyzing, and reporting.

### Ethical Considerations

“Agreed-upon standards for research ethics help ensure that as researchers we explicitly consider the needs and concerns of the people we study, that appropriate oversight for the conduct of research takes place, and that a basis for trust is established between researchers and study participants.”<sup>13</sup> This is the basis of the project. This can be broken down into four basic tenants: respect the rights of the individual, do good, do no harm and justice.<sup>14</sup>

Surveys were collected based upon anonymity. All participants in the focus or study group signed a consent form. (See Appendix E) All were informed that their identities would be protected and consigned a consent form to the fact they would be only identified by number. No names would be used, no addresses other than state of origin. All surveys were mailed back to the researcher without indications of origin other than demographic and religious affiliation. Any person interviewed was given a layer of anonymity through use of an interview number. Those interviewed were also assured that they would not be identified other than by number, that their information would not be

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<sup>12</sup> Nouria Brikci and Judith Green, *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Geneva, Switzerland: Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2007), 26.

<sup>13</sup> Natasha Mack, Cynthia Woodsong, Kathleen M. MacQueen, Greg Guest, Emily Namey, *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*, (Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International, 2005), 8-12.

<sup>14</sup> Nouria Brikci and Judith Green, *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Geneva: Switzerland: Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2007), 5.

used in any other means or form not directly for the research project, and that they would sign consent forms attesting to their free and un-coerced participation. Recordings would not be used for any other purposes than the research project and would adhere to four basic tenants of use which are: respect the rights of the individual, do good, do no harm and justice.

All participants have freely consented and are well informed about what participation in the study entails. The identity of the individual is protected at all times and is not identified by name in any files that are retained. And inference to the participants names have been eliminated through mechanical means and disposed of in a secure manner.<sup>15</sup>

### **Instrumentation**

#### **Data Collection**

It is the researcher's intention to understand the perspective of the participants, explore the meaning that they give, and observe. This would form the basis for analysis and formulation of material to counter what the researcher believes to be an identity crisis within the church.

There are aspects of this study that will use quantitative research methodology in drawing conclusions based upon percentage response to survey questionnaires and direct interviews with participants. This then is interpretative. It is often stated that numbers are

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<sup>15</sup> Nouria Brikci and Judith Green, *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Geneva, Switzerland: Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2007), 5.

not always meaningful especially in dealing with social implications.<sup>16</sup> Since the numbers the researcher is dealing with are not of significant amounts to have trending impact or being able to use them as conclusive evidence; it is not possible to use this methodology to draw evidential conclusions. The sampling is not only a small section of church and society to allow full use of the quantitative methodology but it is not the premise of this study. Rather this project looks to understand aspects of the life of the church and its individuals. The study generates word understanding rather than numerological evidence. Logically then this study is of qualitative nature in understanding and observation of the believer and the church in general.

A sparse amount of information is available as to the aspect that identity plays in the role of the church in concert with the use of the power of God in bringing about the kingdom of God. A literature search of the topic matter does not lead to information that covers it in combination with how identity aids in the implementation, use and evidence of the power and kingdom of God. There are extensive amounts of literature involved in individual topics which are referenced at a further point in the project. This study, in order to supply itself with a base line of understanding, begins with the use of a generalized set of survey questions posed to the immediate setting of the researcher's social interaction with the church. This survey was of an anonymous nature divided into three distinct areas of concern. The first section is demographic dealing with age, race, ethnicity, area, and religious affiliation. The second section consists of open ended questions specific to identity in how the individual defines, views, and considers oneself

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<sup>16</sup> Nouria Brikci and Judith Green, *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Geneva, Switzerland: Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2007), 4.

to be. The last are simple check the appropriate box questions asking about the ability to change at a personal, societal and world level. In the instructions for the survey the researcher also gives the participants permission to add any additional information and insights that they may have. The questions then are suggestions rather than hard and fast requirements.

To further that understanding the researcher will need to expand beyond the walled enclave into the community at large in which this study is based. That community is known as Sound Truth Ministries and will be referred to as STM. First however it must be understood that the makeup of this small rural community is of limited diversity of population making it difficult to get a full understanding of attitudes of the church at large or in understanding diverse population and cultural understanding of identity as a whole. This would then only make this study an exploratory incursion into the subject matter and not conclusive due to limitations of time and size.

To better understand the subject matter across the spectrum, the researcher has sought to survey a larger percentage of the population across regional and denominational boundaries. This will involve the use of chain referral sampling. To that end the researcher has employed outreach to different methods to reach a broader understanding. First the researcher has used previous interactions with churches that the researcher has been actively a participant in the life of that community and asked for participation in the survey. The researcher has also used the services of a consulting survey company (Survey Monkey) to get a broader base and to serve as basis of comparison. This is of the quota sampling methodology in designing how many people with which characteristics include as the participants. Finally the researcher has sought out the help of others in soliciting



the participation of other diverse population groups other than those in the immediate area of ministry for the researcher. This is the use of the chain referral sampling.<sup>17</sup>

### *Sampling or Grouping*

Again this is not wholly representational of the population makeup of the United States or those of the church but broad enough to entice observational conclusions that will lead to the establishment of indices for others to study to test the validity. Gathering of this information may lead to some statistical information in attitudes based upon demographic lines or religious affiliation but not to a significant amount pointing to an absolute trend and will only suggest the possibilities of a trend. This then would lead to a conclusion based upon understanding of observation and not on empirical statistical data but on social interaction and study.

Upon gathering the outcome of the survey material, the researcher further targeted individuals for interview within the STM community to shed further insight on why the questions might have been answered the way that they were. The researcher interviewed several different individuals representing different age groups. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants with knowledge that their identities would not be divulged in presentation of the material and would be referred to only as subject number. The researcher also interviewed individuals outside of the STM community to expand the knowledge base of the how and why questions were answered the way that they were.

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<sup>17</sup> Natasha Mack, Cynthia Woodsong, Kathleen M. MacQueen, Greg Guest, Emily Namey, *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide* (Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International, 2005), 5-6.

Once this has been accomplished and tabulated, the researcher has established a group to explore educational opportunities for the STM community addressing the specifics of identity, which then establishes the rights of the individual to be inheritors of the kingdom and being able to exercise the power of the kingdom to advance the kingdom both now and later. When you understand who Jesus is then you will understand who you are. This is done through use of a one time, day long teaching seminar covering the biblical material to establish the identity of the individual and the process of becoming one who advances the kingdom. It is the beginning of a discipleship modality that will teach not only the how but the why. Consistent with the research methodology is the use of a pre and posttest to assess the viability and credibility of the scenario. The questions would follow the same indicators as used in the survey and the participants would be assigned a number identification to maintain anonymity of identity.

An aspect that the researcher did not cover was economic. It was felt that educational level to some degree had a modicum of influence of economic considerations. It was also felt that due to the limited size of the sampling it would provide little insight other than what educational levels were to reveal. It might be wise in further investigation to include data to see how this factor plays into identification issues.

The other consideration is the limited time segment of the study. To fully quantify the results of the daylong seminar, it may be profitable to survey the participants at a later date to assess the assimilation of the material. It should be a process where after the initial training there are questions that would need to be explored. Does the individual retain the material given the inevitable collision of training and practicality of daily experience with the setbacks it may have presented? Are your expectations about the

change realistic or are they based on overconfidence? Would it have been better to test the concept, the commitment to make the identity change, and the people's appetite for change? <sup>18</sup> This would then be a true test of discipleship training and cause for making a more organic movement rather than a stagnant program. Long term evaluation and re-evaluation are needed.

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<sup>18</sup> Robert I. Sutton and Huggy Rao, "You Call It Scaling. Is It Really Just Swarming?," BloombergBusinessweek, March 04, 2014, Accessed March 06, 2014, <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-03-04/before-you-make-any-changes-ask-these-questions>.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

#### **Research Methodology**

To give advice to a man who asks what to do with his life implies something very close to egomania. To presume to point a man to the right and ultimate goal — to point with a trembling finger in the right direction is something only a fool would take upon himself.

- Hunter S. Thompson

What is the identity of humanity? A simple question with a unique complexity guaranteed to confound the simplest of answers. The purpose of this study has been to understand why those, who claim to be the body of Christ – aka; the church, look no different from those who have no such claimed allegiances. How people see themselves is critically important. It is foundational to what people believe they can accomplish based upon the limitations of who they perceive themselves to be or so I believe.

The question for the individual is “Who are you?” a seemingly simple question that is not often asked especially in the church. There are variations of the question but they do not deal with the core issue of “who are you?” One question which we often hear is “what do you want to be when you grow up?” as if when you have accomplished this process – you are something. Other questions take on some deviation of the action verb to do. Identity then is tied directly to what you do or what you perform rather than who you are. This leads to an identity wrapped around limiting statements beginning with “I

am just a \_\_\_\_.” The problem is that you already are what and who you are by original design. All of these things that you do are just how you express what you are. They are attributes and not the essential you.

I set out to determine who people in the church saw themselves to be. My postulation was that they saw themselves no differently than those outside of the church. Because they did not see themselves as having the identity of the image of God, they were incapable of bringing the kingdom of God about or being able to use the power of God.

Theologically, people in the church had been trained only to see themselves as the broken image of *‘adam*. The church focused their studies on a savior who was a powerless baby and then a broken, battered rabbi who was powerless to save himself from an undeserved cruel death on their behalf. People then see themselves as unworthy penitents incapable of living in the fullness of their true identity. They miss the point of the parable of what we call the “Prodigal Son”. Miracles, signs and wonders are not typically a part of their thinking or action. These are seen as extraordinary events – supernatural if you will - that are obtainable on special occasions and after much travail. For them it is a process rather than an ability proved through redemption and empowerment of Holy Spirit.

Testing was started at STM via a survey. The survey consisted of demographic information and then moved to three distinct areas of concern – identity, creativity, and change. Questions were designed with ambiguity at its core. The intention was to allow for thought not canned answers – multiple choice or fill in the blank. It should be noted that in constructing any survey questions there is a potential to lead the participants

answers by how the question is patterned. By constructing open ended questions you limit the hazard of directing the participant toward your desired outcome thus corrupting collected data. The potential is also there if the analysis of the collected data is manipulated to agree with your hypothesis. Gathering the data together in similarities before naming the categories limits this potential. This is what I hoped to accomplish and collected the data with this understanding. Patterns of thought could then be pulled from the information provided for better categorization. Identity was divided into who they thought they were and how did they define themselves. Creativity was divided into definition, what it was, and were they creative. Change was divided into three sections; the ability to personally change, affect change in others, and change in the world. There is also the danger in designing the questions this way. It might frustrate the participant and they do not complete the survey.

Although statistical information is available from the survey, this is not a quantitative study. The grouping is not of significance to be able to draw conclusions based upon that evidence. This is a qualitative study that has as its byproduct statistical information that could lead to other more comprehensive studies.

I used a method of triangulation of data by surveying STM, outside churches (those that I had contact with through having had worked, attended, or family and friend connections) and a through respondents that I used as a control group from the professional survey group called Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey represented a general group of individuals not necessarily influenced by church membership and being of the general population. STM and the outside churches were broken down according to denominational identity where Survey Monkey was not.

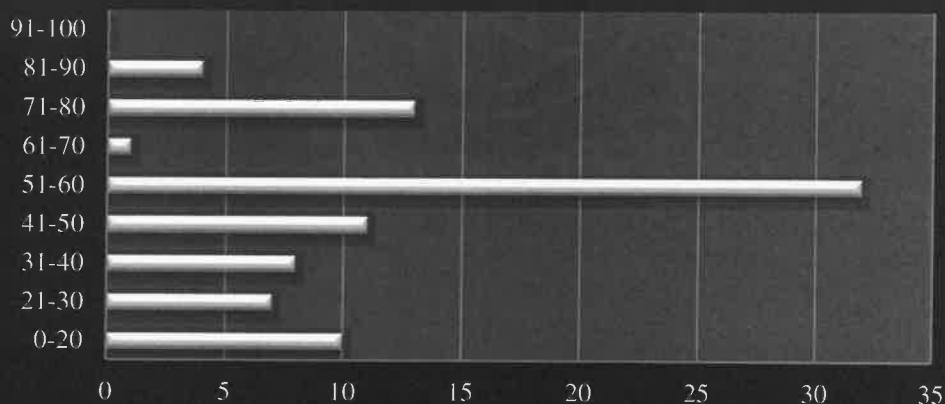
### **Demographic Information**

I am presenting the base information as graphs and charts for ease of comparison. The overall results confirmed my initial statements that the church looks no different than those who are outside of the church. The only surprise in all of it is that most people do see themselves as creative albeit not in the biblical sense of creativity. Within Genesis the concept of creativity was (by ancient Hebrew culture and surrounding cultures) and is to be understood (by those of our culture who read the text) as giving things order, purpose and function. They perceived things as not truly existing until they were given these things. They did not see creativity as making things which the respondents of the survey did.

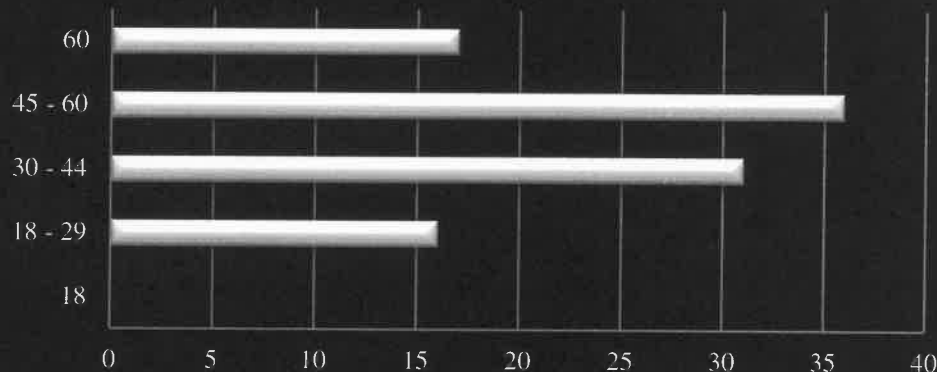
The overall number of respondents within Sound Truth Ministries was only sixteen out of the approximate 100 members of the church. Seventy nine respondents were from churches outside of STM, and 100 were from the Survey Monkey group.

#### **Age**

The greatest number of respondents are of the age categories between forty one to sixty years. This would be what is categorized generationally as the Baby Boomers, and Generation X which would place them between 1946 to 1985. In the STM survey this holds true as it does across the outside churches and Survey Monkey.

**Table 1. Age (STM and Outside of STM)**

	0-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100
Age: Church Survey	10	7	8	11	32	1	13	4	0

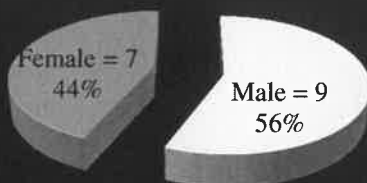
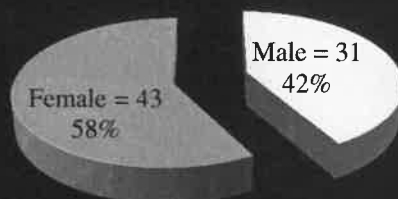
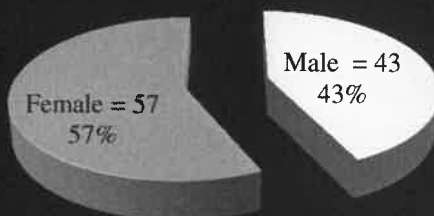
**(Survey Monkey)**

	18	18 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 60	60
Age: Survey Monkey Participants	0	16	31	36	17

**Gender**

Gender of the respondents was within a ten percent range difference with the greatest number of respondents being in the female population in the outside groups and male in the STM group. It did not seem to alter the type of response that was given in either the open ended questions or the multi-choice questions.



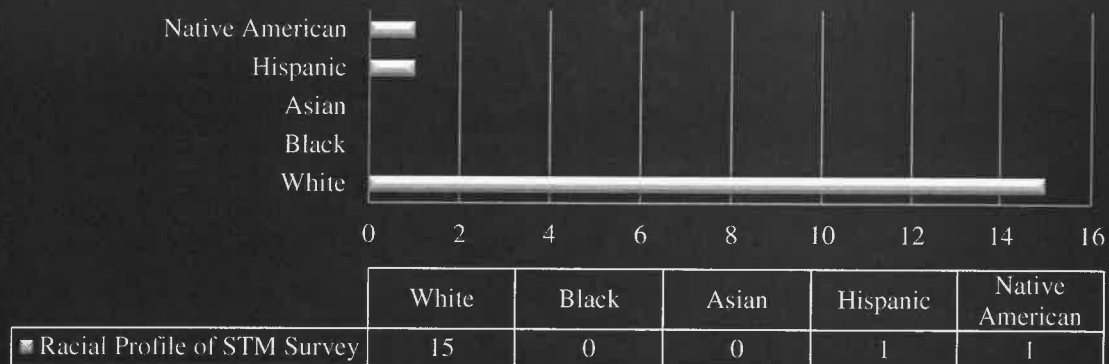
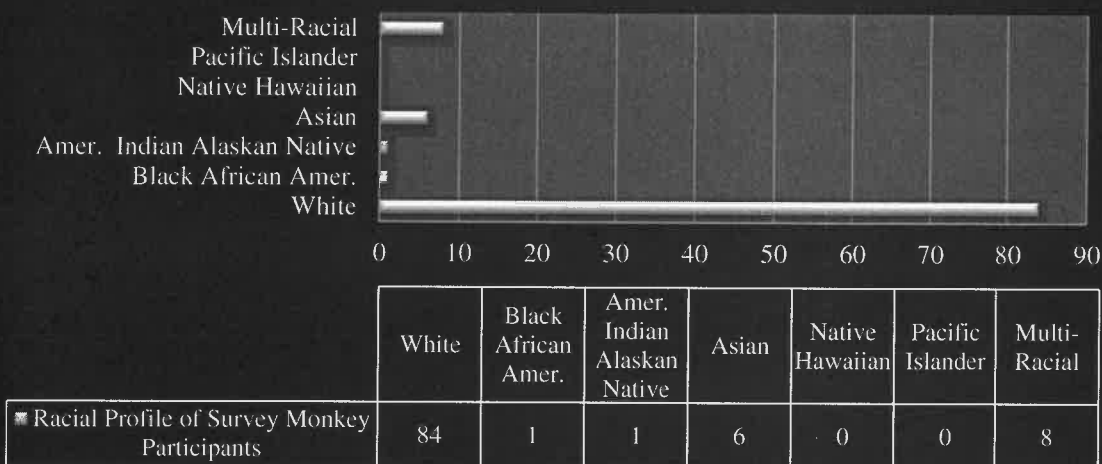
**Table 2. Gender (STM Survey)****(Outside of STM)****(Survey Monkey)**

### Racial Profile

STM is predominantly a white Protestant enclave. There is little or no diversity. Unfortunately, the survey outside of STM did not produce a basis for survey response comparison across racial lines. The respondents in churches outside of STM and from Survey Monkey were predominantly white. I did reach out to diverse communities but

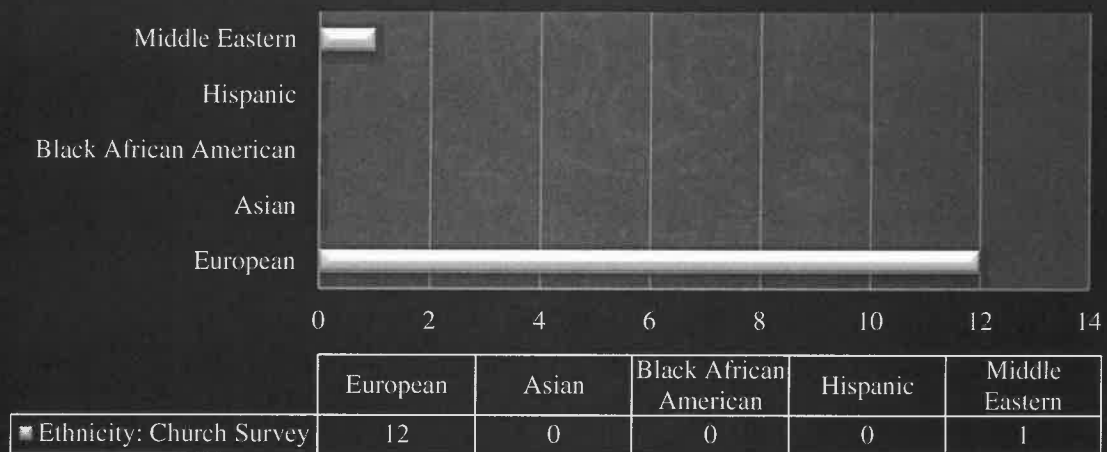
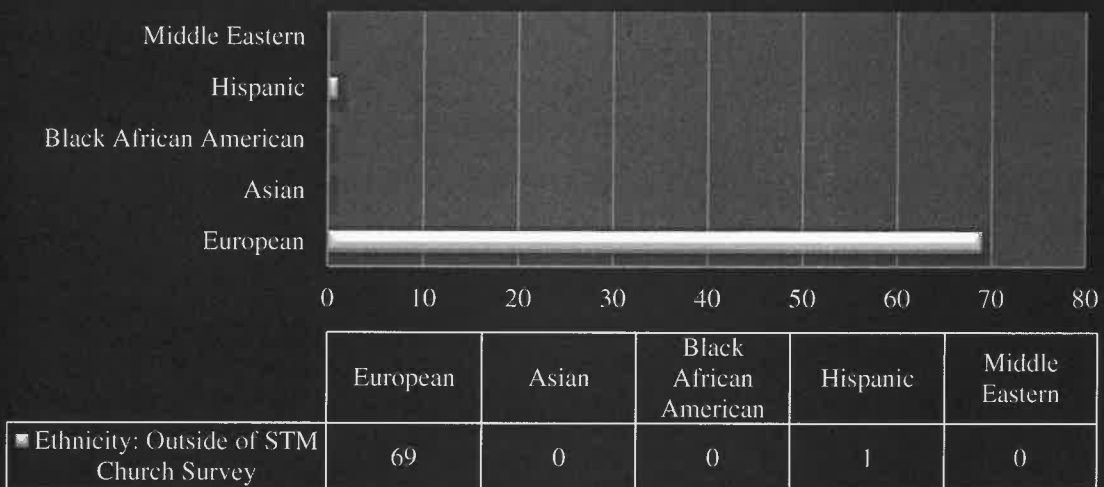
did not receive the diversity response I had hoped for. As far as comparing answers it made the effort easier but did not help in confirming the part of the hypothesis which stated that the church looks the same as those outside of its walls. It would be interesting to do another study specific to a racially specific church such as an African Methodist Episcopal or language specific church such as a Korean church and then compare those results against the ones found here. This will have to be put off for a later date because of the time limitations on this study. To a large degree, this study has been confirmed because the racial makeup of the United States is still predominantly Caucasian but still leaves room for speculative conclusions without inclusion of a diverse population.

From the eighteen respondents who were not Caucasian, the variation of answers did not seem to make a difference. It would be interesting to see if a larger percentage of individuals from a diverse racial background would cause a difference in how the survey questions were answered. At the moment this impact cannot be calculated given the percentage of individuals that did respond. This will not be discussed further.

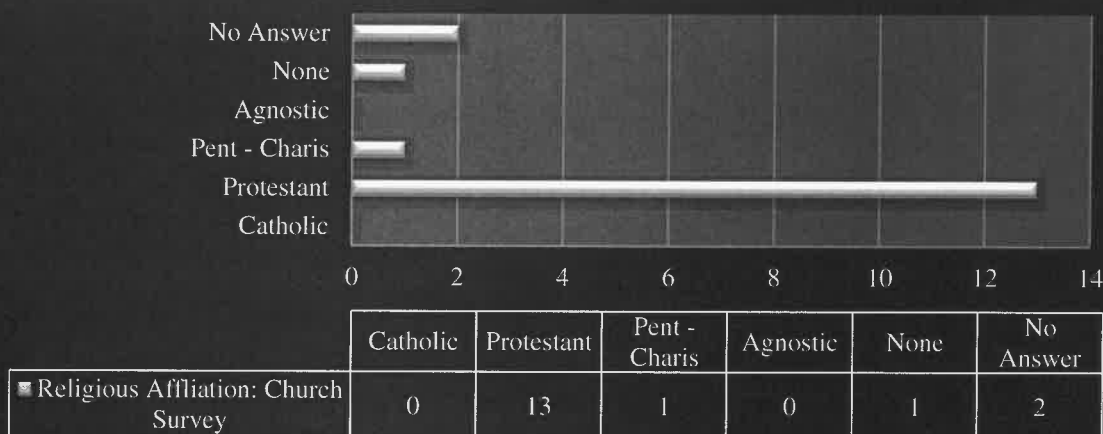
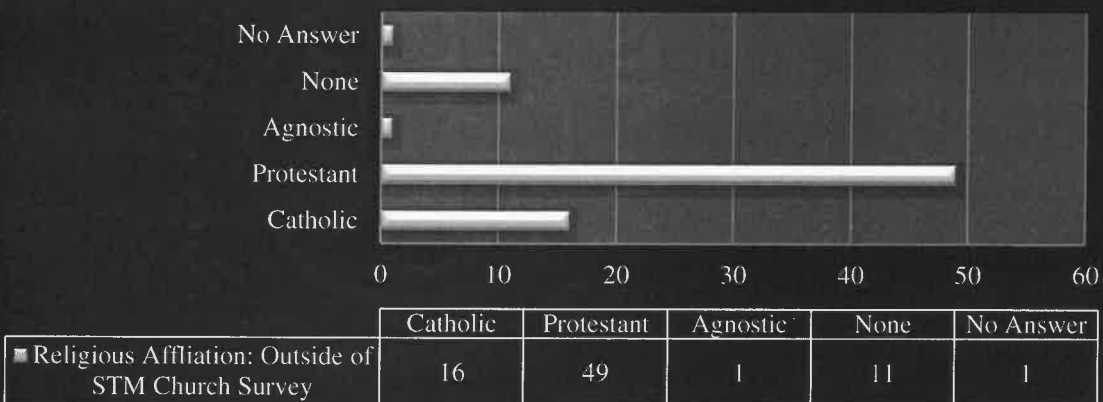
**Table 3. Racial (STM)****(Survey Monkey)**

### Ethnicity

Given the lack of diversity of the ethnic background of STM and the surrounding county, it was thought that ethnic influences would play a factor in how the survey was answered. This proved not to be the case and was not added to the Survey Monkey questions.

**Table 4. Ethnicity (STM) (5 no response)****(Outside of STM)****Religious Affiliation**

Most who attend STM came from another church. STM classifies itself as a non-denominational congregation with deep Pentecostal/Charismatic roots. The survey tells another story of those who attend as they still identify themselves with former denominational affiliation. The answers did not vary according to denomination. This consideration was not added to the Survey Monkey questions.

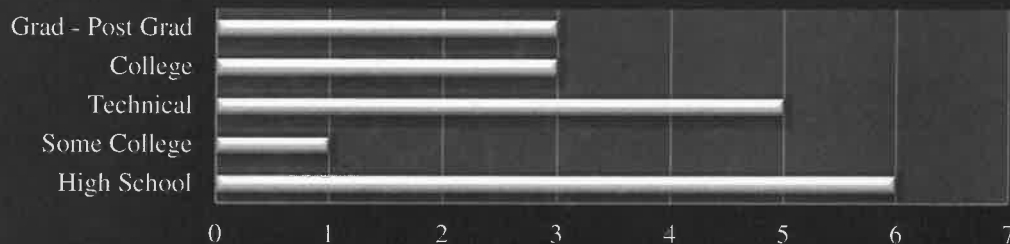
**Table 5. Religious Affiliation (STM)****(Outside of STM)****Education**

Level of education did not play a significant factor in how individuals responded to the questions. Although Snyder County's population, where STM is located, consists largely of those with only a high school education, the majority of the responses were from those from higher academic categories. This was an across the survey similarity.

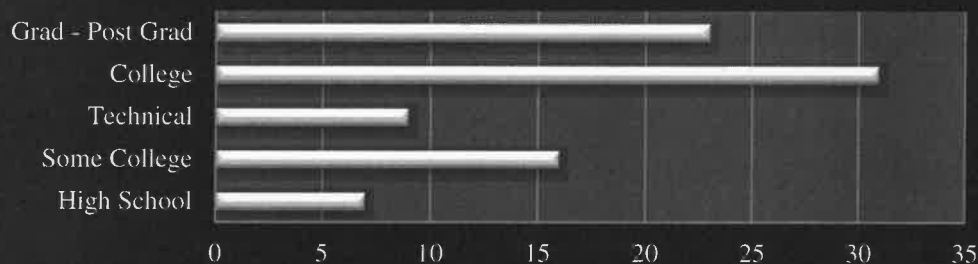
The interesting aside of this portion of the survey results is from discussing the matter with people in and around the community. If you speak with those who have been

exposed to a higher level of education in Snyder County, they express a clear level of frustration with the lack of willingness to change, pioneer or make the quality of life better. This is not something that is not completely shared within STM where the majority of people are content with exactly what is presently in existence. They aggressively speak in terms of the status quo.

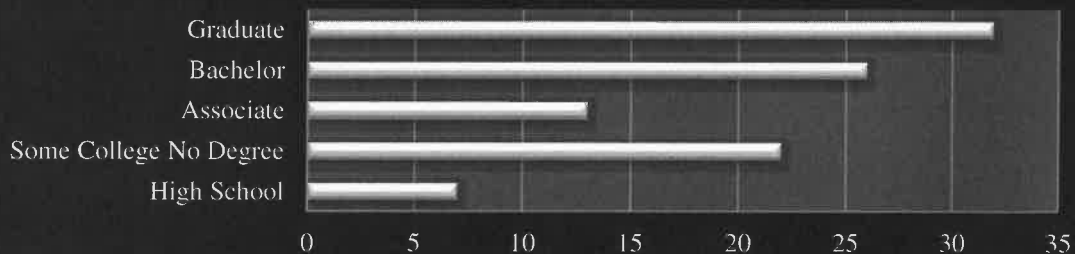
This goes back to the earlier cited attitude of “we’ve have never done it that way before, and we never will”. There is an inherent fear of the new or anything that would change the dynamic of the community. Generations of individuals do not seek anything beyond what was done by the generation before them. Adaptation of some newer more profitable techniques might be assumed but only when they have been proved not to change the base communal attitudes or make-up. A step forward is usually followed by several steps backward to assure placement is exactly or as near as when they first started. Growth mentally or spiritually is viewed with great suspicion and even a sense of revulsion.

**Table 6. Education: (STM)** (some with multiple degrees)

	High School	Some College	Technical	College	Grad - Post Grad
Education: STM Survey	6	1	5	3	3

**(Outside of STM)**

	High School	Some College	Technical	College	Grad - Post Grad
Education: Outside of STM Church Survey	7	16	9	31	23

**(Survey Monkey)**

	High School	Some College No Degree	Associate	Bachelor	Graduate
Education: Survey Monkey Participants	7	22	13	26	32

### Conclusion from Demographic Section

The demographic section of the survey held no overwhelming surprises. It did provide interesting observations and asides for STM. Those were of interest only locally and not of importance to this study. They did however prove that in a population with similar age, race, and educational considerations church and society look the same in how they view their identity. The original hypothesis states the reason why the church doesn't do more of the "stuff" is because of the church and society are virtually synonymous. The responses tentatively prove the premise. The caveat here is that the survey tended to be answered by those with a higher level of education which is not the predominant level of education. The level of accuracy would need to be supported with more face to face survey material collected from the population.

### Text Results Section

Who are you is a basic question the church should provide a definitive answer for. Who you think you are is what you become and is a basic biblical principle – as a man thinks he becomes. The church professes to teach who the individual is in Christ but they do little to provide meaningful discipleship so the individual can assume, put on, and act who they were created to be.

The church spends an inordinate amount of time providing "fire insurance" rather than discipleship. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit becomes an occasion for proof of an authentic Christian walk. The proof is either the gift of a prayer language or being what is popularly called being slain in the spirit. Fire tunnels and drunk in the spirit become recreational activities rather than empowerment to do what Jesus had said we were capable of doing and are ordained to do. They are viewed as proof of fire insurance.



Your identity is supposed to be as the body of Christ and the image of God. When you identify yourself with the things outside of the church, you become what those things are. Nature abhors a void and will seek to fill it. When the church does not act, the outside world is more than happy to act in its stead. This section hopes to identify what it is that people believe themselves to be. Responses to the questions were categorized for evaluation. All responses are presented in the Appendix A.

Definitions of terms used in the first section: **Occupation** represents an activity that one engages in to gain an income, a profession, a job, titles, etc. **Relationships** represent the way that people talk to, behave, or deal with each other such as family groups, mother/father, sister/brother, etc. **Defining attribute** represents: a characteristic, quality, or a word ascribing a quality. **Image of God** represents those qualities of a person who sees themselves as a child of God, doing the work or purpose of God. **God purposed** represents doing those things that God would have them perform.

There are several anomalies that are worth examining in the survey when you chart the percentages. When answering “**Who Do You See Yourself As**” question, the category of **Occupation** is the greater percentage for those from STM amongst the groups surveyed with. **Relationships** were more important as a percentage for those Outside of STM. The significant percentage was in the category of **Defining attributes** where the Survey Monkey group had an almost two-thirds majority of its respondents in this category. But when you look at all of these elements together they all speak of the one similarity amongst them. They all represent things that are outside of the individual

to define the individual. The definition of the individual was dependent upon an occupation, relationships interactions, or defining attributes all outside of the individual. The individuals' identity was dependent upon what they did, or what they had and not who they truly were.

What if these things changed, went away or changed? Would the identity of the individual still be the same? When the identity of the individual is dependent upon an outside condition, culture, possession, or attribute when they are taken away there is no longer a foundation for the identity of the individual. That identity must then fall.

To its benefit, STM did have a higher percentage of those who believed that their identity to be tied or linked to the image of God. This was almost a third. However, with the limited number of respondents this may or may not be reflective of the complete picture of what STM has an identity. More would have to be done to affirm this. This study will not perform that task at this time.

<b>Table 7. Who Do You See Yourself As?</b>	External			Internal
	Occupation	Relationships	Defining Attribute	Image of God
STM	33%	17%	22%	28%
Outside STM	13%	32%	42%	13%
Survey Monkey*	16%	15%	66%	2%

\*Survey Monkey results also included several answers that did not fit in with the rest of the categories. four simply answered *woman*, thirteen answered *me*, and three had *no answer* at all. They were not included in the tabulation.

When answering the question “**How Do You Define Yourself**”, the highest level of response was in the **Occupation** for STM as opposed to the rest of the survey respondents. **Relationships** played no part in the definition of those who attended STM but were of equal percentage to those Outside of STM and Survey Monkey (16%).

**Defining attributes** was the highest level of response among all groupings. **God**

**purposed** was at about the quarter mark for both STM and Outside of STM with those from Survey Monkey having the lowest response in the category. Overall this was not really surprising. Even with the popularity of the book by Rick Warren *The Purpose Driven Church*, people of the church do not see the connection.

The overall percentages are still dependent upon external forces and affirmations. The percentage still represents about three-quarters of those who belong to a church as the major indicator of their collective identity.

<b>Table 8. How Do You Define Yourself ?</b>	External			Internal
	Occupation	Relationships	Defining Attribute	God Purposed
STM	20%	0%	60%	20%
Outside STM	8%	16%	49%	27%
Survey Monkey *	10%	16%	84%	4%

\*Survey Monkey answers include three - I don't as an answer, two - as simply Me, and one- no answer. These were not included in the tabulation.

The next section deals with the creative aspect of identity. **“What Do You Define Creative As”** is the first question of the section. I did not include this question in Survey Monkey. The reasoning for this was the results of the initial survey returns which see the above with **“What Do You Define Creative As”** was listed first followed by **“What Is Being Creative”**. Consulting with others about the question it seemed that it was repetitious and caused similar answers. With that in mind I eliminated this question in favor of **“What Is Being Creative”**. I did tabulate the answers of STM and Outside of STM as they do provide some insight into the thought patterns within a church structure.

The definitions for **“What Do You Define Creative As”** are categorized by the following terms. **Ability or use of gifts** is simply the talents or gifts that the individual believes they possess and express themselves in their use. **Thought process** is the

concept of how they thought about creativity as a pattern of conceiving of an idea.

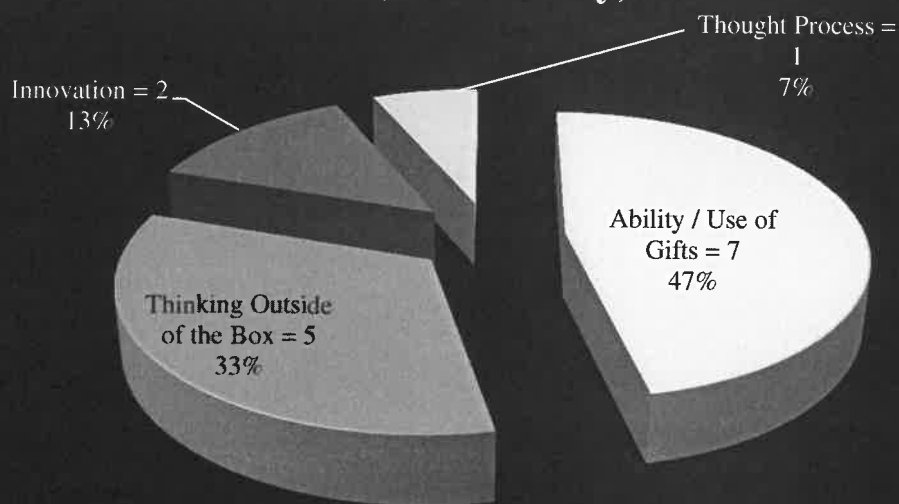
**Innovation** represents the process of introducing a new idea, device or method.

**Thinking outside of the box** was often written in as is. The definition that I place upon it is the ability to formulate thought beyond the cultural/societal norms.

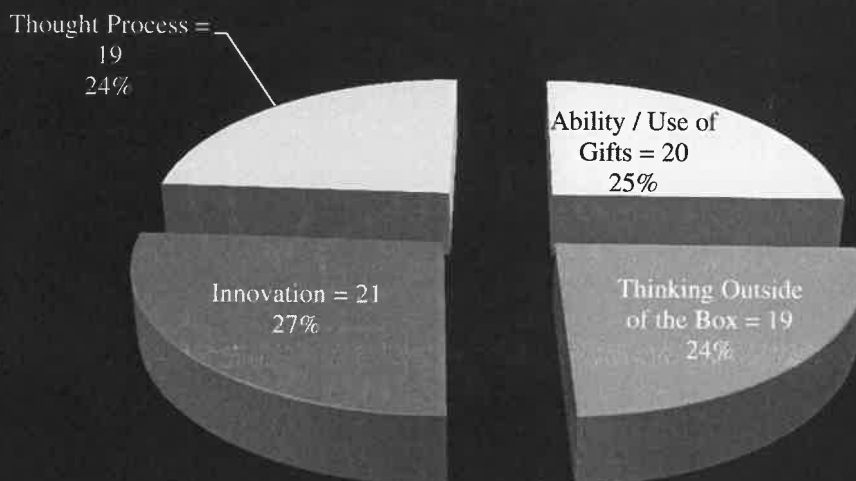
My original thought was that creativity is not part of the thinking of those of STM especially in light of observations with the lack of innovation or progress associated with the area. I saw the area as being more reactionary than thought provoked. I believed that creativity in Synder County was viewed as little more than making a craft. The results did reveal that Innovation was not a strong percentage of the responses for STM as was Thought Process. That did fit with the initial observation of the area.

It was surprising that creativity was viewed as Thinking outside of the box. But on closer thought and observation it is not surprising because of the lack of what is normally viewed as creativity in the area. Those who do think outside of the box do not necessarily remain in the area or if they do they subvert that process. They seek other opportunities in other places that would support that which would account for the flat population growth. The Ability/Use of Gifts was the largest response for STM. This would tie in with the practical approach to life in the area.

**Table 9. What Do You Define Creative As?  
(STM Survey)**



**(Outside of STM))**



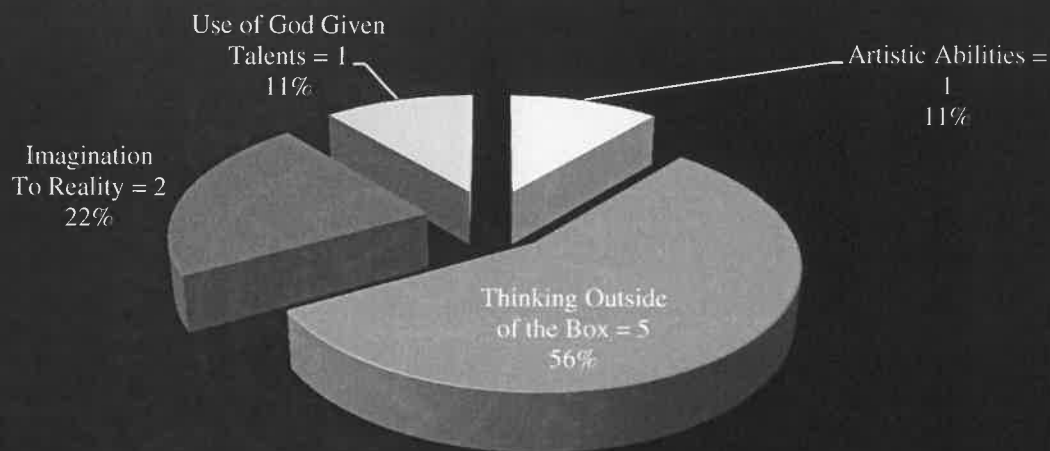
The comparison with those in churches Outside of STM saw an almost equal division of the perception of what creativity was amongst all four areas. So the STM view is of the practical as opposed to the rest of the church.

The definition for “**What Is Being Creative**” are as follows. **Use of God given talents** is a special ability that God has allowed that individual to do well. **Artistic abilities** is the showing of an imaginative skill in ability to perform them. **Imagination to reality** is the process of taking an idea from the internal thought process to one that is brought to the outside world in some tangible form. **Thinking outside of the box** is the ability to formulate thought beyond the cultural/societal norms.

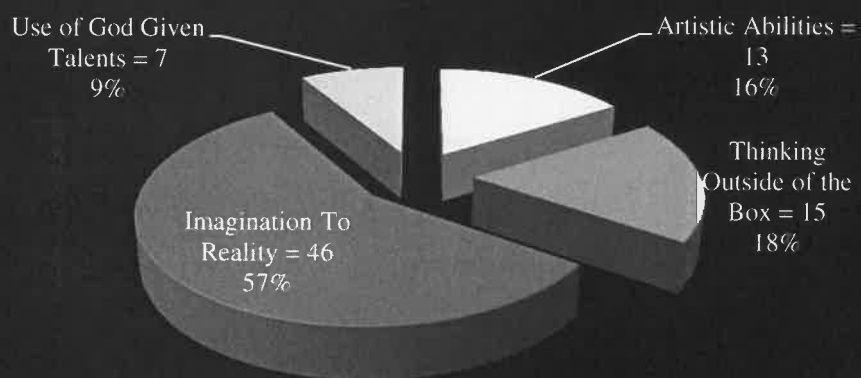
STM’s reply pattern still holds to what the definition of creative is with what is being creative. This is also verified in the interview process that will be discussed in a later portion of this chapter. Thinking outside of the box is the largest percentage amongst those of STM who did respond. This does correlate with the general population’s concepts of what being creative is with the second largest section. It is interesting to note that the pattern is almost equal when viewed graphically. This tends to prove the hypothesis that the thought patterns outside of the STM and the church in general are no different from those outside the church walls.

The concept of biblical creativity does not match the thought patterns of the church as it exists today in society. If we are to accept the concept that we are made in the image and likeness of God, then we must accept the fullness of what true creativity is. It is not just making things.

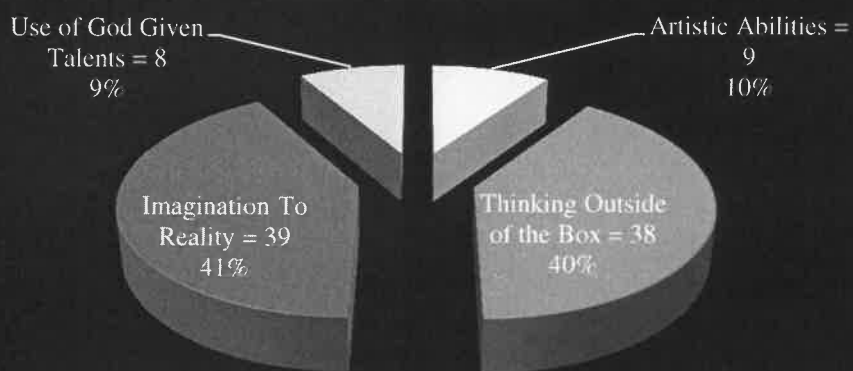
**Table 10. What Is Being Creative? (STM Survey)**



**(Outside of STM)**



**(Survey Monkey)**



**Do You See Yourself As Being Creative** has some interesting asides. If you view creativity only as the making of things, then you must assume that individuals are in fact creative. With a biblical perspective this is not the case. Creative action biblically involves giving something its order, function and purpose. Humanity was given dominion over what was made with specific processes. With that you have the order of what humanity was supposed to accomplish, its function and purpose. Creativity is the spreading of the kingdom of God through the use of the power of God. That was originally part of the design for humanity. Creativity does involve the act of assembling things which have already existed but is not the complete picture. Human creativity has the act of assembling elements to it but should also include giving order, purpose and function to the process. This discussion can be seen theologically in the writings of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>1</sup>

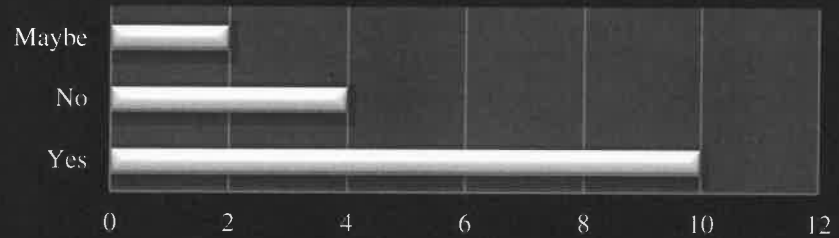
As you look at the response to this question in concert with the question of what creativity is, you can see the emphasis on process of putting things together and why people view creativity the way they do. They do not tie this to the aspect of what their identity is. They see it as an outside response to circumstances rather than one that is internally positioned to be the image of God – doing what the Father is doing – in bringing about the fullness of the kingdom in a now and not yet realization. This further confirms the hypothesis. Greater statistical study will need to be done to affirm this. Interviews with those of STM helped to confirm this understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> A good reference for an understand of this concept is available at [http://www.evolutionnews.org/2010/04/what\\_was\\_thomas\\_aquinas\\_view\\_o034061.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2010/04/what_was_thomas_aquinas_view_o034061.html) (accessed June 4, 2014) providing an understanding of Thomas' view of creation that affects theological understanding.

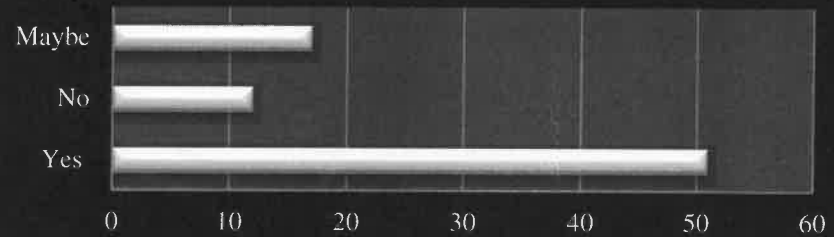


**Table 11. Do You See Yourself As Being Creative?  
(STM Survey)**



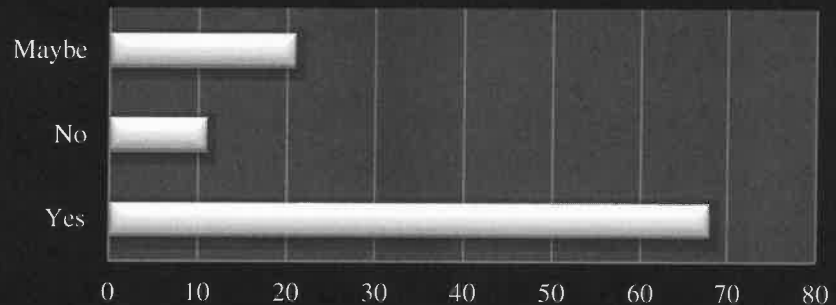
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Do You See Yourself As Being Creative? STM Survey	10	4	2

**(Outside of STM)**



	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Do You See Yourself As Being Creative? Outside of STM	51	12	17

**(Survey Monkey)**



	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Do You See Yourself As Being Creative? Survey Monkey	68	11	21

The next section deals with the ability of the individual to change their life, the lives of others, or change in the world. Part of the design of humanity was to have the ability to affect change. The concept was to go out and subdue which is the ability to affect change in the rest of creation. To go out and be fruitful is to alter the complex of existence thus in fact to cause change. Change is built into the system. It is part of the original design that we are able to have a positive impact upon creation for the kingdom of God. Through the fall humanity had a negative impact. God already had a plan for redemption to restore the ability to positively impact the whole of creation to those who follow the pathway Jesus set forth.

My original thought was that the respondents would perceive themselves as having limited ability to change themselves, others, or the world as a whole. This was not the case. Further investigation is needed to be able to fully qualify the response. Some indication is given in the interview stage of this study discussed later within the report.

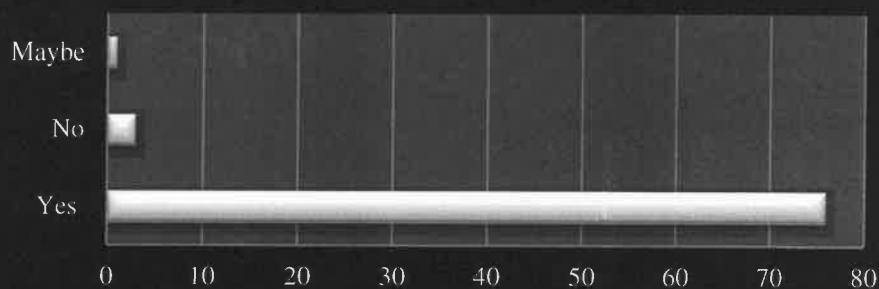
The ability to change self, others and the world within the results from STM and the church Outside of STM is just about equal throughout. The notable difference is in the Survey Monkey results. Initially in the questions to STM and other churches I did not include a choice for *maybe*. I did include this in the instructions for the survey to allow the participants to add any additional information or comments. There was a trend to add the term maybe to their answers. In recognition of this fact I added it to the Survey Monkey survey questionnaire. I also have confirmed this trend with the interviews that I have documented. An upward trend is seen. Further investigation and verification is needed.

**Table 12. Have the power to affect change in your life? (STM Survey)**



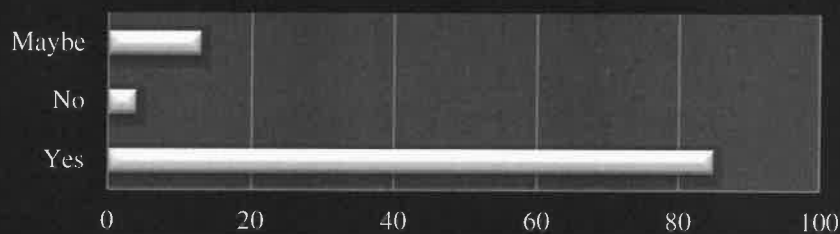
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect change in your life? (STM Survey)	15	1	0

**(Outside of STM)**



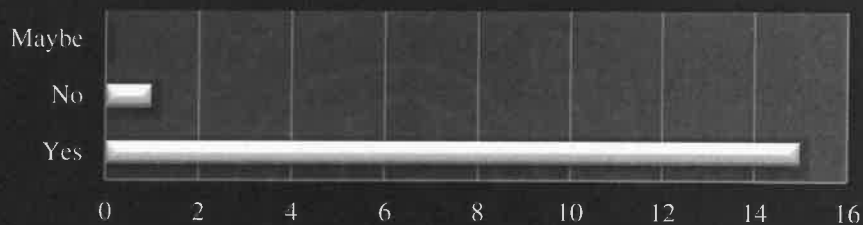
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect change in your life? (Outside of STM )	76	3	1

**(Survey Monkey)**



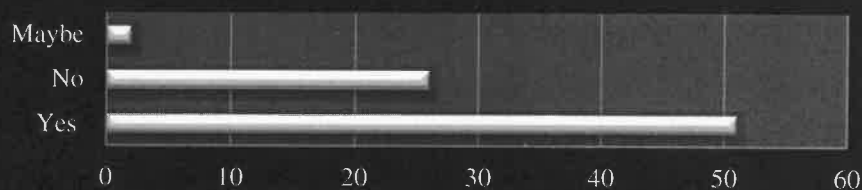
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect Change in Your Life? Survey Monkey	85	4	13

**Table 13. Have the power to affect change in the lives of others? (STM Survey)**



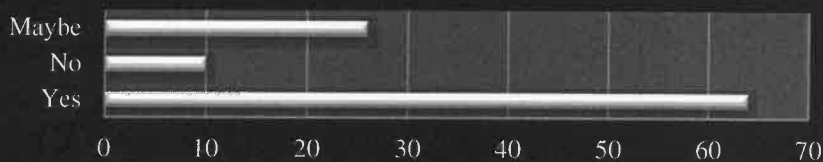
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect change in the lives of others?	15	1	0

**(Outside of STM)**



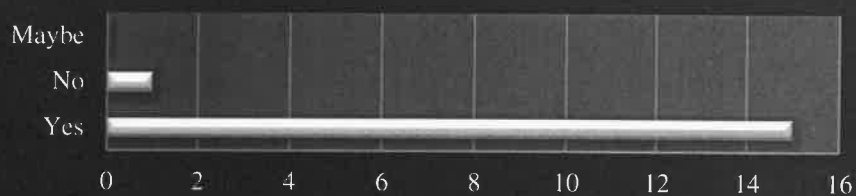
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect change in the lives of others?	51	26	2

**(Survey Monkey)**



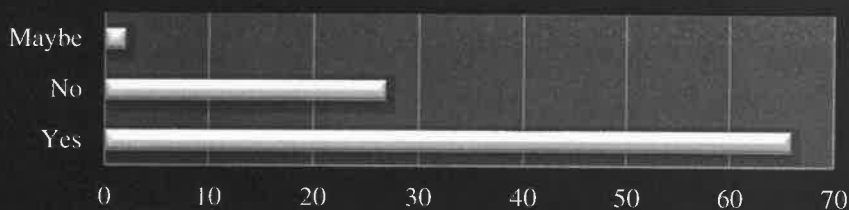
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect Change In The Lives Of Others?	64	10	26

**Table 14. Have the power to affect change in the world? (STM Survey)**



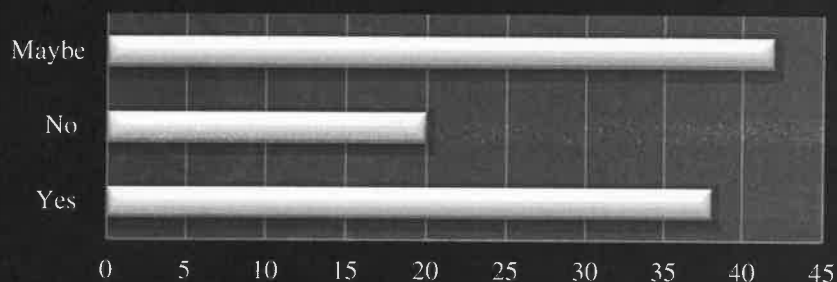
	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect change in the world? (Church Survey)	15	1	0

**(Outside of STM)**



	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect change in the world? (Church Survey)	66	27	2

**(Survey Monkey)**

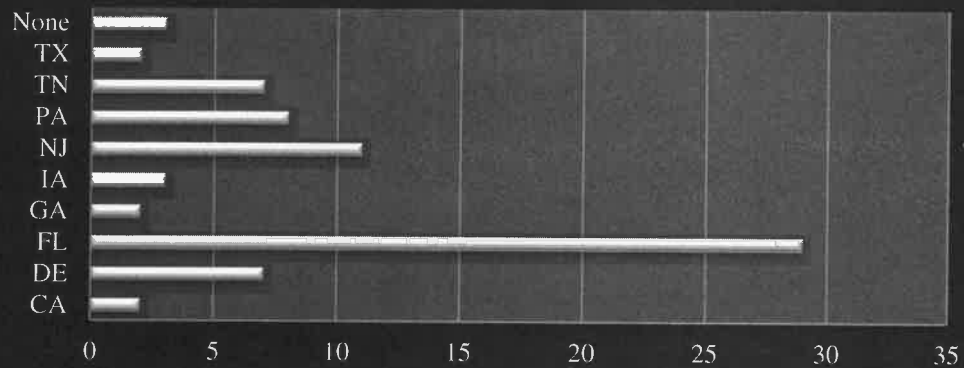


	Yes	No	Maybe
■ Affect Change In The World? (Survey Monkey)	38	20	42

### Census Location

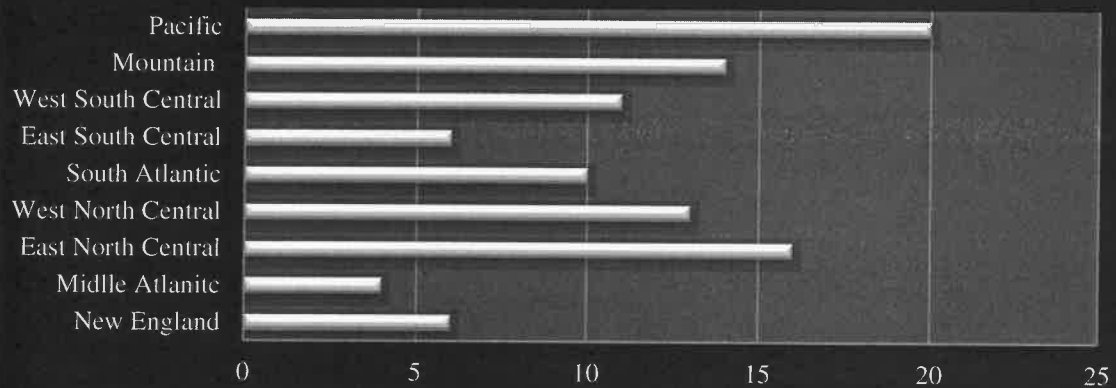
STM is located in Freeburg, Pennsylvania. The location information was state specific to those outside of STM and those of Survey Monkey were regional. The conclusion drawn was that the designation of location did not matter.

**Table 15. Census Location  
(Outside of STM Church Survey)**



	CA	DE	FL	GA	IA	NJ	PA	TN	TX	None
■ Census Location	2	7	29	2	3	11	8	7	2	3

### (Survey Monkey)



	New England	Middle Atlantic	East North Central	West North Central	South Atlantic	East South Central	West South Central	Mountain	Pacific
■ Census Location (S.M)	6	4	16	13	10	6	11	14	20

## Analysis of Data

### Conclusions Drawn from Survey Results

What we have seen thus far is that region, denomination, race, ethnicity, age, nor education had impact as to how the individual perceived their identity to be. Identity was viewed as something outside of themselves. A closer study via region could be developed to test this but the generality of this study provides little evidence to the contrary.

Of the fifty surveys passed out to the members of STM, only sixteen were returned; nine Male, seven Female. Age groups identified were: 0-20 = 5, 21-30 = 2, 41-50 = 2, 51-60 = 5, 61-70 = 1, 71 – 80 = 1, 81-90 = 1. For race, fifteen individuals identified themselves as being white with one being Native American. Under the ethnicity category only thirteen people responded with twelve being from a European ancestry and one identified as Middle Eastern. With religious affiliation thirteen people identified themselves as being a part of a Protestant denomination, two identifying themselves as Pentecostal/Charismatic and one with no affiliation at all. Educationally six were High School graduates, one had some college, five had a technical school (career training) background, three were college graduates and three with some grad or post graduate work.

An interesting aside – even though the initial survey took place in a church that claimed to have Pentecostal/Charismatic roots, none of the respondents identified themselves as such. They defined themselves as either non-denominational, protestant denomination or a mix. This in itself has a potential for further study in the lack of identity for STM in its teachings, vision and mission. This is not a part of the purpose of this study and will not be discussed further.

The overall response to this section did not supply any data trends other than to confirm the overall makeup of STM. This is a predominantly white area mainly of European ancestry, and has a heavy Protestant influence. This correlates directly to the statistical information of the area in general.

### Identity Results

The questions here deal with the specifics and purpose of the survey; “Who do you see yourself as?” and “How do you define yourself?” The questions were designed to allow the participant to answer the question of their identity without asking for or giving them a listing of potential answers. They had to fill in the blank. Once having collected the responses, and placed them into the categories, the trend appeared that people do in fact see their identities as something that is built from outside inward. This contradicts the survey findings that people believe that they are the ones who affect change in themselves, others, or in the world. This dichotomy becomes self-evident when talking to people. They believe in thinking outside of the box in principle but do not embrace diversity of thought or individual. They seek out sameness and reject change.

I placed them into what I believed to be four prevailing categories. I have included all the answers in the appendix listed in the categories. For “who do you see yourself as?” these categories are: Image/Child of God, Defining Attribute, Occupation, Relationships. For “how do you define yourself?” they are: God Purposed, Defining Attribute, Occupation, Relationships.

My initial thought is that by identifying oneself as the world did, that most would not consider themselves to be creative or have the ability to affect change. At best they might consider themselves to have limited capabilities to be creative or to affect change



of any type. This was proven to be an error in thought. The survey proved that not only did they think of themselves as creative but also having the ability to affect change. My perception of the question about the ability to change did not impact my understanding as much as being creative. I thought that most would perceive being creative as an artistic endeavor only rather than something that was available to most if not all. The respondents mostly saw themselves as being creative. They determined that it was a thought process, thinking outside of the box, the ability to move things from conceptual to reality, and/or manipulating things for other than intended design.

I checked the Biblical concept of creativity and this led me to a divergent concept of the creative process. Creativity in the Biblical construct is not about making things. That is entirely a modern concept.<sup>2</sup> The society during its origin of the narrative understood creativity to be giving something its order, purpose, function and condition. If you examine the first chapter of Genesis, this pattern becomes self-evident.

To aid in further clarification of the survey results at STM, I conducted interviews with a quarter of the respondents (four of sixteen). I hoped to shed some light on how people thought when answering the survey and their reasoning in answering the way that they did. Transcriptions of the interviewed are available in Appendix B.

### The Interviews

Identity is not something that is often discussed. “Who do you think you are?” is a socially negative question. It is a hostile question evoking a strong reaction. It is usually a question that challenges your identity. In a military context it is a challenge to be identified as either friend or foe.

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<sup>2</sup> I deal with this extensively in the teaching material that was produced and included reference and foot noted reference material there: Text of Class and PowerPoint Slide Appendix C.

The polite social question is either “what do you want to be when you grow up?” or “what do you do?” This is what society believes you are – what you do. Society will teach you what they want you to be. Shakespeare was not subtle in Hamlet by asking the question of life and death –

“To be, or not to be--that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles. And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep-- no more--and by a sleep to say we end”

It should not be a question as to who you are, especially for a supposed Christian. It should be an assumed knowledge, a forgone conclusion, and it is not. Christianity and society think almost exactly alike or at least at an organizational level. It would be interesting to see a comparison of the church and fraternal/sororal organizations and how alike they may or may not be. However this study was designed as a study of generalities and not specifics of organizational structures. Those of the church and those outside of the church have an interconnected moral code that is the basis for interaction. Each group processes information exactly the same and this is the reason why the church looks and acts the same as those around it. This was what the hypothesis, the survey and the interviews tried to confirm. There are also the underlying questions of why and how people think this way.

Transcripts of the interviews are available in Appendix B. Full recordings are available upon request. All who were interviewed signed a release form and were given editorial privileges and rights to rescind any and all information as it pertains to their interview. A copy of the form is also included in Appendix E.

In the interviews, I went back over the survey questions trying to understand the why of how they were filled out. I chose four individuals from the median range of the group – the twenty year and the fifty year, two single and two married, and two male and two female.

Those interviewed did not identify themselves as either Pentecostal or Charismatic but with denominational titles. One individual when questioned did admit to a background that had a Pentecostal influence but did not primarily identify with it. They did not consider themselves non-denominational either. This had shed light on issues that surrounded the context of STM which claimed to have Pentecostal/Charismatic roots. They have the tendency to identify themselves with a sub-grouping – denomination and seems to be a recent development. Non-denominational seems to be a transitional terminology until a movement can label itself. Some might call it the beginning or renewal of the apostolic movement. This is conjecture on my part.

With the question of identity there was a difference in the way it was answered. The twenty year old had a tendency to answer the question in terms of what they did (occupation). The fifty year old had the tendency to answer in terms of relationship (mother, father) and attributes (funny, abilities, intuitive). It was more of dominance rather than a clear implication. Both groups used similar terms. There was a commonality of response in that their identities were directly tied to things outside of themselves. They allowed these things to determine who they were. It is reversed thinking. It is the result of influences from the American/Protestant work ethic that imply that you are what you accumulate and/or do. Your value is what you bring in or make. It is an identity that is based outside of self and therefore easily disrupted, perverted, and

distorted when those outside things change. For the interviewed who you are is based upon what you do. Although identity is noun based, it is still being described in the sense of an adjectival phrase.

One of the twenty year subjects did at first identify themselves as an attribute tied to an action. This was an individual who cared for others seeking to bring joy to them and pulling out their best. Defined as an attribute – the things outside of self are the things they depended upon for an internal identity. In this understanding things grow from the outside in. Causality of identity is of external origin instead internally focused because they are the image of God.

In both age ranges there is a shared belief that who we are is what we can or cannot accomplish. It is a limitation of the individual. The individual is labeled by an authority (teacher, parent, pastor, etc). Once you are labeled you are no longer allowed to exceed that label. Labels determine income. Income determines ability and availability of educational opportunity. You didn't have any hope of going to a college if it is beyond your economic classification. It is an outside influence exerting undo pressure on the individual. It is not a process of discovery or enlightenment, but a guided movement toward a predetermined category or box. It is a societal process of telling you what you will become based upon an arbitrary pattern of what society considers to be necessary for the individual's participation. This patterning is handed down for no reason other than this is the way that we do it or this is the way we have always done it. It becomes the axiom that is repeated hoping for a different set of answers – the classical definition of insanity.

Inner identity and gifting are ignored. They were a program that was here today and gone tomorrow, a flavor of the month. Social standing and economics are the driving forces for identity.

Both groups have the recognition of an immutable central core which they believe might be their true identity. Unfortunately, they do not understand that this core is where they can affect their context. They believe that the context affects who you are. I admit because we are in this world, the outside invades the inside however the design was for the inside to invade the outside. We are to give order, purpose, and function to the outside. Our identity is predetermined – we are the image of God. How we carry that out and express it is our choice. It is also our choice to accept our identity or reject it. It all comes down to choice. Problems arise when we allow others to make the choice for us.

The more we all become integral, interdependent participants in the relationship of creativity, the closer the kingdom will come because we use the power of God for the order, purpose and functions of God.

Those interviewed have the understanding, if limited, that they are always the same person. They believe that experience changes their perspective of self which is true. The realization should be that the core individual doesn't change. The unfortunate thing is they perceive the outside circumstances to be the deciding factor of who they are and not how they express themselves. The challenge is to overcome the circumstances. The circumstances determine the challenge parameters but not the outcome. The individual in relationship with the Father decides the outcome. This is not what either the church or society teaches. It is a system of victimization based upon common brokenness not the ability to overcome circumstances.

Realization after the fact is the issue here. The respondents believe only after the circumstance exerts its influence is change possible. This again is backwards. Although circumstances may limit parameters of expression of self, they do not define self. We need to understand that we are change agents and not the effect of change. We should be the ones giving order, purpose and function based upon the relationship that we have with God. We then can do what the Father is doing to change things to the way they were intended, and designed to function.

The other part of the twenty year group identification was as a child of God but not with a full understanding of what that meant. The clarification came as they identified the “perfect example of that is being a spiritual being.” This is a disassociation of the physical. This is a continuation of Greek philosophy and of the Gnosis Heresies as seeing the physical as corrupt. This is a limiting phrase and goes against the essence of the biblical statements of humanity being very good - both physical and spiritual. They saw the spiritual/supernatural as being superior. God did not make two different and distinct worlds with one being superior to the other. This view is not part of the understanding put forth in the Genesis accounts. It is not a Hebraic understanding. They do not understand humanity to be separate entities of body, mind, and spirit with one being superior to the other. It is all one – that being God’s creation.

When those who were interviewed, viewed themselves as children of God, they only saw themselves as not being whole. It was a broken image. We are much like the prodigal son, who would seek to assume the role of servant just to get back into his Father’s household, doesn’t understand that he is and has the fullness of being the son of the Father. We do not understand that body, mind and spirit are not separable nor are they

superior to the another in the context of humanity and creation. You cannot separate them without becoming less than human. It is the order, purpose, and function of the design of humanity to be body, mind and spirit – one complete entity. All equal to the other rising to the occasion as the context calls for that leading in service to one another. Not one lording over the other. Those interviewed believe that the spirit is more than the physical – better, more real. The problem is that this is not what was created. They were and are in complete balance. We are the ones with the perceptual problem.

The interviewed go so far as to say that the supernatural is more powerful. This is part of Gnosis and Greek philosophical thought – one is better than the other – therefore preferable to other. The difference is subtle here but is still the underlying causality – they see it as gifts of the Spirit coming from the higher to the lower rather than enablement to accomplish the purpose and function to which they were destined and ordered.

It is also subtly eluded to from the Senior Pastor but not overly so. The use of the word supernatural is pervasive. They see the supernatural invading the natural. They see the fire of God coming down and not coming forth from within. Heaven invades earth rather than the will of God being done in both places equally. It should be noted that there is no such understanding of separate worlds biblically. The separation of elements is for order, purpose and function – not superiority. What God created was and is one creation. It is all the same. We are the ones who separate items that are not separable without understanding the complete picture. The only true separation is God from creation and is not God's creation.

The understanding of those interviewed is typically American; identity correlated by what they do. This is added to by the cultural influences of the American/Protestant work ethic of you are what you accumulate and/or do. Your value is what you bring in or make. It is an identity that is based outside of you and therefore easily disrupted, perverted, and distorted when those outside things change. This is exactly the diversion that the serpent placed upon humanity in the garden; that their identity was outside of themselves and not internal and already solidly in place.

There was a part of the conversation that had a unique twist. The question was has anyone or any organization ever asked you directly who you were. Family, society, and schooling made the typical attempt to qualify identity as what you did. When it got to the church the answers were sharp. One participant had an indictment for the church. The 20 year range participant charged that the church told people what they were but never explained what that was. They were told that they were children of the Most High God and that the kingdom was at hand but gave no definition or indication of meaning or how to accomplish it. The church is good at throwing terminologies about with very vague descriptions. It was in terms of generalizations and platitudes rather than true discipleship and mentoring. There is no development of how you express who you are. The church never truly establishes a way of showing you who you are, your true potential or how your true potential can be used to expand God's kingdom. It doesn't show people who God is and the love of the Father. This is an incredible indictment of the church and how it teaches.



The church has a lot of platitudes but not much substance. It has all been talking heads and lip service but no practical application to back the theory. The church has become an hour of power on Sunday with an inconsequential influence during the rest of the week. The phrase that comes to mind is “miles wide, inches deep.”

Mentorship/Discipleship must take place. It is a lifestyle not just a philosophy/theology. Intellectual pursuit is needed but the application needs to go with it. Reason and demonstration are integral elements. It is in the experience that we finally come to some understanding of what it is to be children of the Most High God. It is in the explanation that we transmit the experience to the next generation. It is in the demonstration that it becomes not just of the mind, but also of the body and spirit thus completely human involving body, mind and spirit. The explanation must accompany demonstration. The problem is that there is much to undo so the process can increase.

There is the recognition that the message has been corrupted and co-opted. It is a slow progression but it is to the state that a major outbreak of the kingdom may need to occur to dynamically alter the condition of the western church. It is difficult to revive a patient when the patient is already of the opinion that they are dead. The church not only views itself as limited but also inconsequential in believing that the end time is the only thing to look forward to. Circle the wagons and wait for the Calvary to arrive. It is interesting in that the Calvary had already arrived – 2000 years ago.

Within the twenty year range there was the observation that there is so much more potential that is wasted in the children's and youth's ministry because it is segregated from the main community of the church. This can be corroborated by the different times

for youth and children worship and in some church's buildings. Families rarely participate in the life of the church community as family. As a sidenote, because of this many don't know who goes to what family.

The interviewee noted it would be ideal to have time when we get together as the whole body. It should be where people from the street learn what their identity is. What is being spoken from the pulpits is watered down. This communal identity needs to be fostered from an early age. It is not that the adult cannot learn rather the adult needs to unlearn to relearn. The process becomes more complex if the individual is not actively looking for the more of the situation.

The observation continues as they believe what we are teaching children is awful. We are teaching them that their identity is what they do and not who they are. We teach them about what God did or does and not why He did or continues to do it. We do not teach who God is or what God's love for the people is. This causes people to look at what Jesus did (past tense). Miracles are then viewed as a process rather than a release of the kingdom. The release of the kingdom is the original design, order, function and purpose of all of creation. A person is healed because of who God is, who the Son of God is, who the Holy Spirit is and who we are

With this corrupted vision in place they see themselves as not a part of the kingdom but separate from it. It is a broken image that only is functional in perceiving God as a vending machine. It becomes a relationship that is based on what can we get from the Father, or how God can help me in this situation. It should be the recognition that before the beginning of creation God knew who we were and put inside of us all the things needed to participate in the whole of creation.

The concept is of a vending machine deity that is here to solve all of our problems and come to our aid at a moment's notice. This represents the fall out of the 70's, the Late Great Planet Earth debacle and in a way the Pauline concept of the eminent return of Jesus. Paul got it wrong. Hal Lindsey with Carole C. Carlson got it wrong. But people still believe in the premise that God will save the day – soon and very soon. This is an escapist theology that does serious discredit to those Christians of the past and to the teachings of Jesus. Jesus taught that there would be trials and tribulation for those who were followers but it was not of God but of this world in rebellion to the kingdom of God. The goal of the believer is to cause the kingdom to break forth in a progressive manner so that the total kingdom of God could then be established.

When I attended his classes, Dr. Ben Wetherington III had a way of fully debunking this concept that needs to be repeated and often. The concept of that every Christian gets a free pass from the trials and tribulations is anti-biblical in nature. Jesus specifically states that you will suffer because you are a follower and that you are not exempt from these matters in life. As far as being removed from all situations it does an injustice to the martyrs and saints who have gone before. What the gospel states is that miracles, signs, and wonders will follow you because of who you are. You are to proclaim the good news, set the captives free and declare the favorable year of the Lord.

Nowhere in any of the scripture does it guarantee an escape from this life – just that God will make those things that were meant for harm to be turned into good. You will go through them without a doubt. How you go through them is dependent upon the relationship that you have with God (see Job). Will you come out unscathed? It is a possibility and a probability but no matter how it comes out it will be for the good of all.

What that exactly looks like is not explained. It is a concept and process of now and not yet. We are to work until the kingdom is fully realized. When is that completed? When Jesus does return and fully establishes the kingdom. We are just to spread as much of it as we can until that time.

We never fully know what the outcome of any situation is. That is because we are not privileged to be able to see all the factors involved. God is the only one who has that capability. However, when we partner as co-creators, we can only do what the Father is doing. It is in collaboration that factors become workable.

The next set of questions had to do with the concept of creativity, not only what it was but also how the individual perceives themselves to be involved in it. The definition of creative was first.

Among those interviewed, there are three dominate categories. The first sees creativity as a thought process. This concept is closer to the biblical understanding of order, purpose and function. It is a pronouncement of a permissive command. It is an encouragement to become what you were designed, and purposed to do. Then there is the concept of manipulation of things which already exist and transitioning them into something that had not existed in this form before. Then finally, there is the standard concept of it being something that is artistically based.

The idea that these are things that are outside of the individual's identity is a part of the definitions. They believe that creativity is contextual. Circumstances and context are just points from which you operate. It is not your identity. The context is where you can choose to express your identity in a form that is understandable. It is never limited to just one set of circumstances. It is infinitely variable.

Creativity is a process but it is not just making something. There is a technicality that must be addressed. In the classical scientific understanding, matter cannot be either created or destroyed. The assumption then is that it already exists – therefore we are presented with the old axiom of there is nothing new under the sun. Because everything already exists, to human standards, creativity then is a matter of putting something to a different use or purpose. It is purposing those elements that are already here. When you assemble something you are giving it a certain order, a particular function and with that its purpose. Even art for art's sake follows this principle. Something that is just made has no purpose or function and therefore, is in the state of chaos. This is not creative, this is fruitless and impotent. It is only in giving something order that it is truly creative. Completely creative acts take in the process of discerning what it is supposed to be in the kingdom (its purpose) and how it functions.

Much can be said about this and is dealt with extensively from various resources. The process can be begun by examining the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*. Augustine and Aquinas have extensive treatise on the word but this is not the place for that.

As stated earlier, the biblical concept of creative is giving something its order, purpose and function. This is the understanding of the ancient Hebrew and surrounding cultures. When we enter into the picture it is as co-creators who are to act as ambassadors that have been empowered to act. Much as the story of Joseph who acts on the Pharaoh's behalf to accomplish things, we too have been given that authority. We can only do what we see the Father doing in this role. We are the image of God, and not God.

Nothing new about creativity was revealed in any of the discussions with those interviewed. They have traditional American cultural understanding (prejudice) of

creative actions. They do not have full understanding of how creativity is an expression of identity. They do not see that order, purpose and function are the basis for the act of creativity.

The next set of questions is about the ability to affect change in self, others, or the rest of the world.

Change for the most part is seen as an internal reactionary item to things that are outside of the individual. It is a process of making decisions in reaction. It is also seen as a limitation, because this happened, I no longer had this option. The reaction is negative and not a positive response. It is not seen as an opportunity to express one's identity in a different fashion. Even if the circumstances are negative, it is a different opportunity for expression of self in a positive modality.

Change for the respondents is dictated from the outside toward the inner. The outside environment controls the decision making action. Change happens with decision. Decision is limited choice. This is how the ability to change self is viewed by the respondents. The initial core remains constant but how I allow myself to respond to that change then alters the way I see my identity.

The subtle difference can be expressed as either "I am a well person fighting off sickness" or "I am a sick person fighting to get well." Your identity is constant – you are a child of God. How you choose to assert your identity to your environment is the power of choice to change. Can you learn to change the way you express your identity? Absolutely, but that doesn't change who you are. You are always the same – the expression of who you are changes.

The respondents see that in making a choice you promote change. The unique answer came when one respondent identified with pursuing change. Yet they limited that change only to the personal because of the concept of free will. They measured change in terms of success to impose something on someone. Free will was the determining factor. They did not see that any interaction causes one to experience things differently. This causes change even if infinitesimal in initial perception. This is the butterfly principle or more accurately the scientific theory of chaos.

The chaos theory has been grossly misinterpreted. The original concept was put forth that a butterfly in a remote section of the world could or would be responsible for a weather pattern in another section of the globe in as much as they could or would be responsible for that weather pattern not to occur. That may seem like an incredulous statement but when examined in its context it is not. What this actually states is that no one can accurately predict the outcome of any one situation simply because we do not and cannot see the complexity of events and circumstances that have caused the event to occur. Just as the flapping of a butterfly's wings in Africa could aid in the cause of a hurricane, it could also prevent it. That one event, the flapping of the butterfly's wings, could set other events in motion in a chain reaction. All of it is dependent upon the sequence of events in order for any of it to occur. Remove any one element and the event will not be the same.

The respondents do not see themselves as having the true ability to change self, others or the world simply by being who and what they are. The presence of a believer is enough to cause change. Those interviewed view change as a completely external force rather than a force/ability/power to be exercised from within to the outside.

The hope in all of this is while interviewing, they all had the knowledge that deep within them was an immutable core. They just did not know what to do with it or how to deal with it. Their true identity is locked within the aspect.

Upon analyzing all the above data, I designed material to present to a small class of individuals. I again asked the question – who are you? I then set about to construct a biblical tour of Genesis 1 through Genesis 2:3 that would help to firmly establish; the beginning of an understanding of who they were designed to be; what was ordered for them, what their purpose was, and how to function within the world as a follower of Jesus.

### **Outcomes Summarized**

#### **The Program Design**

The title of the program is *Who Are You?* with an opening statement of:

The problem of the modern church is identity. Christian and non-Christian look virtually the same. Identity is the basis for order, function, and purpose. Society implies you must possess or be possessed by something to have an identity. If you have this, you can do this, so you can be this. That is backwards to the biblical example of Jesus and God's intention.

It had six sections (Introduction, You Are Not Your Job, You Are Not Your Circumstance, You Are Not Your Condition, You Are Not Your Culture, Genesis – The Blueprint), a series of charts breaking Genesis 1: 1 through 2:3 into verse, word groups, and observation, and finally a list of Scriptures for Further Study.<sup>3</sup> This was contained in a thirty-five page handout that each attendee was given to take with them. A pretest and posttest was given. Seventeen people attended and nine returned the pretest and posttest. It was presented on 5/21/2014 in the Solid Rock Youth Zone of STM.

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<sup>3</sup> All program material is included at the end of the dissertation with copies of PowerPoint slides used: Text of Class and PowerPoint Slide Appendix C.



The introduction restated the question of Who are you? The premise was that we pay little attention to the question because it is rarely asked. Most would reply with their name but is it our identity. Other reply with the answer of I am just a \_\_\_\_\_ fill in the blank. Some identify themselves as fanatics of sports teams, musical groups, authors, movies and/or movie stars. Others reply as members of organizations, sororities and fraternities. Some identify themselves as disease survivors, mental conditions or physical limitations. Others identify themselves by what they own or don't own. But what would happen if anyone of these things described were suddenly taken away, what would you claim as your identity. We confuse who we are with what we are and take that as our identity.

I went through each individual section. The first section dealt with the subject matter that You Are Not Your Job. The opening statement was "What would happen if tomorrow you woke up, went to where you worked and found out that it no longer existed?" Each of the first four sections dealt with the concept of who you were not. This is because society is eager to tell you that you are each one of these things. You are not your job, your circumstance, your condition, or your culture.

The next point was to give them the basis for who they are. It started in Genesis – The Blueprint. We have a tendency in Christianity to skip over a very important piece of scripture that sets the stage for understanding what the rest of the Bible is about – who we are and our relationship with God. The church passes over the introduction that sets up the plot for the entire collection of books we call the Bible. Genesis 1:1 through 2:4 is the complete blue print of what the whole of creation was supposed to be.

We do understand that creation, thus creativity, is the full concept of the power (*dynamis*) of God given to us to create and transform all of creation. We do not understand that we have been given the authority to use that power for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God. From this point, I also introduced further supporting scripture (Isaiah 61:1-2, Matthew 1:7-8, 28:19-20, Luke 4:18-19, 16:15). I took them on a tour of Genesis chapter one in an explanation of what how we have the tendency to impose our way of thinking upon what we read but in order to get the full meaning we have to walk a mile in the shoes of the author of that time. That time was not of concern but rather the orderliness, purpose, function and condition. It was not so much what was created but for what reason.

Part of that reason was that these were the important first steps in creating the environment where things can be placed upon the canvas of existence. I further explained that no element is sustainable unto itself and all elements must be placed in order and balance. Seasons are not based on mechanical means but on the practices of the people in relationship. We are given the power and the authority to operate within God's creation, to shape and mold it so that it fits the ultimate purpose of God's design. The original design of humanity was to have the authority to act and be empowered by God to be fruitful, multiplying the image of God throughout creation.

The tag of the program was that you were not your job, circumstances, condition or culture. These are things that do not define who you are. They are things that can help express who you are but they are not the center of who you are. Your job, circumstance, condition and culture all change. You have the ability to affect them in a positive way by bringing the kingdom of God to them. You are an ambassador of the kingdom of God.

You have been given full rights and privileges to act as one who represents the kingdom. You are the one who can give them their order, purpose and function as it relates to the order, purpose, and function of the kingdom of God.

You are made in the image and likeness of God and therefore you are a child of God and are creative. You have been given the mind of Christ. The Spirit of the Lord is upon you. You have been anointed and given the word of God and sent by God to proclaim the good new to the poor, release the captives, recover sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to comfort all who mourn and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. You will dream dreams and you will prophesy. You have the protection of the Father as you are one with the Father being made in the image and likeness of God. You have been set apart (sanctified) for the purposes of God. You have been placed in Jesus as Jesus has been placed in the Father. You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do all these things. This is who you were intended to be from before the beginning of the world.

Accept IT. Embrace IT, and Change the World!

The program was approximately two hours long. In talking with one of the attendees about a month later, they are still taking in what was presented to them. They are beginning to see that they should have been aware of this, and that they are in fact made in the image and likeness of God. This program needs further development to become a practical application of a discipleship program. It needs to be one that takes them from the assumption of their true identity to complete activation in the fullness of what it means to be the image of God. We are the image of God, which uses the power of God to bring about the kingdom of God. The results of the pretest/posttest are below.

<b>Table 16. Who Do You Think You Are? Program Test Answers</b>		
	<b>Pre Program</b>	<b>Post Program</b>
1.	A mom and wife and business owner	I am a child of God, a kingdom changer (bringing people of darkness into light)
2.	Husband and father of two, who is a conservative Christian	I am a child of God, created in His image
3.	Son of the one true King	I 'm the likeness and child of God
4.	I am loved	I am the image and reflection of God.
5.	Daughter of the king	I am the image and likeness of God
6.	Child of God	Image of God!
7.	Doer for God	Child of God
8.	I am hopeful, positive, calm and adventurous	I am a child of God
9.	A monkey who hangs pipe	The image of God.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION**

#### **General Reflections**

There are several issues which are highlighted by the results and conversations held with participants as well interviewees. It would be assumed that the most significant was the incursion of identity issues within the church. That is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. When looking at the church's history until now, you begin to see how far we have drifted from the original course and plan. The one percent initial shift of emphasis from the Isaiah 61 pronouncements of Jesus that the kingdom is at hand to the Pauline emphasis of the imminent return of Jesus in the *Perusia*, has put us on the present path of an ineffectual, irrelevant, and powerless church who has an extreme identity crisis.

This emphasis of the Pauline structure of a church based upon issuing "fire insurance" policies has complicated matters and has removed the proper emphasis on the solidity and relevancy of the gospel of Jesus in demonstrable and real terms. It has made for an ineffectual discipleship of the body of Christ and a hierarchy of structure. It has led to the separation of the spiritual and physical. It has become more of a practice of the orthodox (having the right opinion) rather than having the practice of love in action *via, veritas, vita* (the way, the truth, and the life). What then is at issue is discipleship.

We have moved from discipleship as a way of replicating the Imago Dei to one of flavor of the month programing filled with new buzz words and models of thinking to help insure structural integrity of the hierarchy. Discipleship should be the affirmation that we are made into the image and likeness of God. Because we have been adopted and grafted into the vine that is Jesus, we have all rights and privileges as an heir. We should also be made critically aware that in order to fully realize the kingdom, we must participate in it bring about the kingdom.

To be a disciple is to be a pupil, a student, a follower whose business it is to learn to take on and accept the complete image of the mentor in word and in deed. It is not just an intellectual exercise to analyze thoroughly but to become capable of performance with verifiable results. If you want to become a musician, you cannot say that you are one by simply visualizing yourself playing the instrument. Yes, we learn the theory and intellectual aspects of the mechanics it takes to produce a sound. That is needed to be able to understand the assignment as placed in front of us to play. But that still doesn't make you a musician. At some point you must put finger, body, and/or breath into use so that something is produced in the way of sound to verify that we are a musician. Level of performance is not at issue but what is produced is. If you can produce sound at any level, you can call yourself a musician. How is it then we can call ourselves Christian if we do not do what Christ did? I will never be a car no matter how long I spend in a garage and saying vroom, vroom. Calling you one doesn't make you one. Visualizing does not make you one either. The proof is in what you do. Unfortunately we require no proof of fruit which is biblically unfounded.

We equate membership with being a disciple. Pay your membership dues and you're in. However, this is not a complete indictment of the modern church in that they have only reproduced that which they are trained to reproduce. Father forgive us for we know not what we do. This is something that goes beyond the chronology of the present age. Yet we are responsible for its proliferation because we do not question. We have allowed ourselves to fall victim to the seven deadly words "we have always done it this way" and turned it into a doctrine. The truth is that it was not always done this way.

This is a time of rediscovery of our roots, practices and implementation. The focus of the pastorate should be in the training of disciples not delivery of self-affirming feel good speeches. The training model is not a difficult one to implement because it is well demonstrated and documented within the confines of the text in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts. In the words of John Wimber it is a matter of doing the stuff. It is teaching about the stuff, it is a matter of demonstrating the stuff, and it is all about doing the stuff that we see, know and hear that the Father is doing. It is about relationship with God.

Identity is the basis. It is knowing who you are that you can do all the things that are required of one who is called Christian. The codifying of identity enables the vision to be able to perceive yourself doing what needs to be done, doing the things that need to be done, and thus having the fullness of the kingdom when all is said and done. This is beyond rocket science in that it is all encompassing but it is not difficult to implement because it is doable by everyone no matter their level of existence.

The problem is that there is much to undo that has already been done in error. People hold onto the familiar simply because it represents the familiar – no matter the

evil involved. From discussions that I have had, it might be in the best interest of all that a discipleship program be started at the earliest possible age. The children's program run by Global Awakening at their Voice of the Apostles event is a prime example of the impact that it could have.

You have a tremendous amount of undoing to get an adult to the point of being able to accept the reality of the fullness of the gospel in action and demonstration. It becomes a matter of yes I believe but help my unbelief. It is not insurmountable but requires significant amount of input and dedication.

The other issue would be you would have to re-invent the model of what a Christian church really is. It is not a building or a particular location. It can no longer be an hour of power per week with nothing going on during the week besides a rush to the buffet line. We literally have to go back to the garden.

### Summary

The purpose of this project was to test the hypothesis that those of the church looked no different than those outside of the church. The researcher needed to affirm the hypothesis so that a practical and demonstrateable discipleship program could be developed and implemented.

The researcher used qualitative design due to the need of gathering data from the participants as to their understanding of their identity. To this end the need was to develop a series of surveys whose respondents would be from different elements of the church and a generalized control group from outside of the church. The surveys were from the researcher's context both present and past, as well as other affiliated churches from colleagues and a control group from the on-line survey company, Survey Monkey.



There were 196 respondents in total. 16 from the context, 86 from churches outside of the context, and 100 from Survey Monkey.

The survey took in demographic information that proved that the concepts of identity were the same across generational and educational level. Denominational affiliation made no difference in how the surveys were filled out. The respondents were asked to explain how they defined themselves and who they saw themselves to be. They were asked what it was to be creative. And finally they were asked if they saw themselves as having the ability to change themselves, others, or the world.

The purpose of the questions was to see if the respondents understood their identity as being made in the image and likeness of God. They were, in fact, creative and able to change themselves, others and the world into the revelation of the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6: 9-10)

This first phase enabled the researcher to triangulate, categorize and analyze the data to help understand what and how people thought about them. The researcher saw that in fact there was little or no difference in the thought pattern of those within the church as compared to those in general society. Some interesting phenomena did occur at first look but was later better explained in the interview process. It appeared that there was some understanding in the church surveys that people were made in the image and likeness of God. (It a limited understanding but not one that had an ability to be implemented.)

Once this was accomplished, the researcher set up a series of interviews that enabled the researcher to uncover the underlying causality of the thought processes. The establishment of the underlying cause led to a fuller understanding of how those who

responded might express their identity. It was revealed that the identity of the interviewees was firmly rooted in the American cultural understanding of you are what you do. It was an understanding contained as either an attribute of personality, a relationship, or an occupation. Your value is tied to what you do and not from who you are. It was an inverted house structure with the foundational elements added late in the process of construction.

Comparing the teaching methods of churches the researcher was familiar with, you can see a pattern develop. The concentration centered around a broken image either that of a powerless child, or a condemned, broken savior unable to free himself from an unjust death because we were responsible for it, we caused His death, and we are accountable for it. We were unworthy sinners in the hands of an angry vengeful God. Then when all is said and done in either working for your salvation or accepting it – wait for that self-same savior to save us once again from this miserable existence in which we rightfully suffer on earth. Add a side of guilt to support the church, give money to the poor to make us at least feel somewhat better about ourselves, and just pray for the sick. You now have the sum total of Christian identity as it presently exists. Not much different that your typical fraternal or sororal organization. The difference is that most churches could use an open bar, a community dance, and better food.

The research determined that a teaching on identity was needed before beginning a discipleship process. Traditionally the teachings on man's identity started with the fall of Adam and Eve. If the first Chapter of Genesis is mentioned, it is only as a litany of days in which God put it all together. It is a quick review of days so that they can get the

broken image. The question for the researcher to explore then is “what was the image before the fall?”. Through careful research it leads us back to the complete blueprint available in Genesis 1 through 2:3.

The researcher put together course material based upon that concept and presented it to a small group. The two hour course was held in an informal atmosphere. A pretest and posttest was given to the participants asking who they believed that they were. Course material was designed to take the participants through the first chapter of Genesis in a revelatory fashion to highlight the fullness of what the underlying design of the text – not a chronology of events but a revelation of order, function and purpose.

It was explained that the basis for the identity of the church is Genesis chapter one through chapter two verse three. It fills out the initial plan for all of creation and its complete identity. It was the design of the course material to re-introduce the full image of humanity rather than the typically taught broken image. The reason this was explained is because a broken image presents a whole host of issues that are difficult to deal with and overcome. With this broken image it is tough to even begin to imagine that we could carry out the commands of Jesus (Matthew 10:7-8; 28: 19-20, Luke 16:15), let alone the proclamation of Luke 4:18 – 19/Isaiah 61:1-2. From this broken image, we cannot understand that creation, thus creativity, as described in the first chapter of Genesis is the full concept of the power (*dynamis*) of God given to us to create and transform all of creation. We do not understand that we have been given the authority to use that power

for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God. To complicate matters even more, add to this a rejection of the early Hebrew understanding of Genesis with our 2000 years of over intellectualized concentration of the fall of man; we lose the complete focus of a completed and whole creation.

The researcher felt it necessary to re-introduce the complete and whole original concept of humanity so that the participants could begin to understand what it is to be redeemed, with a complete renewed, re-generated image as Jesus presented and demonstrated.

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:27-28)

Again here is the emphasis of humankind being made in the image of God by saying it twice. Not only was it written twice but the distinction of male and female is that one is not given superiority over the other. God blessed both entities equally, given both complete capability to have dominion over the occupants of the creative stage. This was the order of things.

We have a unique relationship with God and as described in the text of Genesis it isn't exactly clear what the image of God is. The Old Testament abhors any representation of God in any form. The phrase the image of God raises humans above the rest of creation and puts humanity alongside of God but not equal too. The term image (*sa'lem* in Hebrew) is explained by the use of similarity (*demut*) in verse 26. The two words when placed together mean according to a similar but not identical representation. We have to remember not to connect image exclusively to a spiritual or moral capacity of

humanity. It is about the likeness and not a precise indication of what that nature is. The idea of likeness is that a human being ('adam) became God's representative on earth. We have the right to explore, subdue, and partake of the creation as the words in the text convey in "let them have dominion over". We, men and women, are to rule the world in God's name.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.<sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:1-3)

The heavens and earth were finished as in being brought to the place where they were given their purpose. However, notice the final phrase – "because on it God rested from all the work that He had done in creation." This is an open ended statement. The craftsman was done with the work that he would do, but leaves it in the hands of those whom he is training to ready the work for its completion. We were given the world in correct, systematically ordered and complete form so that we – as representatives of the Divine Order - may continue the creative exploration and expansion to the glory and purpose of God.

After a close reading of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3, we can begin to have an understanding that we, being made in the image and likeness of God, have been given authority and power to carry out the plans and purposes of God the Creator. This image was broken through the fall but redeemed through the preaching, teaching, demonstration of signs and wonders, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The final act of reclamation of the image of God in fullness was with the final act of Pentecost as the re-empowerment of the redeemed image of God in humanity. It is the re-introduction of the God breathed

capacity of humanity to carry the image and likeness of God. Like the prodigal son parable – it is a process. All the items are in place – the carrier just needs to be cleaned up. This was the plan from the outset of creation to have a fully authoritative and empowered humanity. This redemption of the image of God is so that we can fulfill our destiny as seen in the life of Christ as testified especially in the texts of the evangelist John. (John 5:19, 8:38, 17:6-24).

With this explained the posttest was given. The result marked a difference of thought from the outset testing. Interviewing others after a period of time, the researcher found that many were still contemplating the material presented and it was having a positive impact on how they saw themselves and the church.

### **Conclusion**

The data has suggested that the hypothesis was largely proven. Those who attend the church do not see themselves as being different than those who do not attend. Their identity and thought patterns are virtually the same. It is not a new phenomenon but one that has been occurring for a long period of time. The focus of the church has been to get people saved and to wait for the end time resolution. This has been evident throughout the history of the church past the first generation of believers.

It is not so much the de-emphasis of providing “fire insurance” but an inclusion of what was the original design of humanity and the restoration of the order, function and purpose. People cannot see themselves doing what they do not believe that they are capable of. The surveys and the interviews prove this to a limited degree. The bigger issue is discipleship – how the church sees itself and recreates itself.

The very intent of redemption is to bring about the fullness of the kingdom of God. That can only be accomplished with the power of God and by those who have the image of God as their identity. Creativity is at the core of it. We, being made in the image and likeness of God in order to carry out the purposes of God, must demonstrate the power of God so that the kingdom of God can become self-evident.

Organizational structure is not going to do it. Types of worship service are not going to accomplish it. No amount of doctrinal purity or doxological praxis will accomplish it. It is only by the re-assumption of the fullness of the image of God that humanity will be able to accomplish its purpose.

It is a matter of knowing and experiencing that you are made in the image and likeness of God. With that identity you can know that you are a child of God. Part of this is the ability to be creative – give things their order, function, and purpose. It is because you have been given the mind of Christ. The Spirit of the Lord is upon you. You have been anointed, given the word of God, directly from God. Your purpose and function is to proclaim the good news to the poor, release the captives, recover sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to comfort all who mourn and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

These elements are not foreign to the redeemed and regenerated identity. Because of that identity you will dream dreams and prophesy so that the kingdom can come to its full potential. You are one with the Father being made in the image and likeness of God. You have been set apart (sanctified) for the purposes of God. You have been placed in Jesus as Jesus has been placed in the Father. You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do all these things. This is who you were intended to be from before the

beginning of the world. You can help to fulfill the command to go and make disciples of the world – through the restoration of the image of God and demonstration. It is a both/and situation.

Discipleship is helping make others look exactly like Jesus because Jesus looks exactly like the Father. This is what Jesus professed as he declared if you have seen me you have seen the Father. Jesus could only do what the Father did because his identity was intimately tied to the Father. That identity was empowered by Holy Spirit so the completed identity was that of the Son in the Father as the Spirit is in the Son and the Father and they are all within each other.

We have been placed and are a part of it all. The problem has been that we have taught and retaught that we are separated forever by sin when this is not the case. So you see that impartation is just part of the fullness of the image of God. You can give a person all of the tools but if they do not fit the individual they cannot use them. Such was the case with David and Saul's armor. However, when David assumed his own identity, his actions brought about tremendous results and liberation. Knowing your identity, knowing your purpose and function, enable you to dutifully carry out that which you have been designed to do.

Identity is the key to the use of the power of God to bring about the kingdom of God. It is only the first step in the process of discipleship. The next step is showing how to be a disciple so that signs and wonders will follow. When the two are fused together the outcome will be incredible. At that point revival will not be something that is prayed for to come but something that is brought forth and replicated generation to generation.

Further study is highly encouraged.



### **Transcription**

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. There is a need to maintain accuracy of information shared. There are at times when material is added to explain local colloquialisms and terminology (Pennsylvania Dutch) to make it clearer to those who would read the transcripts as to common meaning. Grammatical problems were handled in the same manner as not to alter the inference or intended meaning of the participant. Those additions are noted either within bracket areas within the text of the transcript or through footnoted material references for additional explanatory material.

All material was converted to Word Documents for review and use.

## APPENDIX A

### Survey Question Responses

**How do you define yourself:** non conformist fun, a young lady, daughter of God, self employed, relationship and work, don't know, healer, hard worker, a person, awesome, child of God, kind-helpful, very well, intelligent, by legacy, job/occupation, attributes – helpful, compassionate, loving, caring. Wife/mother/grandmother, dad/grandpa/breadwinner, church lady, thoughtful and anxious, solitary/pensive/critical/curious/constructive, average mother/job/in the background, responsible adult/head of household/creative/analytical/leader, sister/daughter/friend/godmother/granddaughter/niece/student, God Created, wife/author, husband/provider/follower of God, by the word of God and intimacy with the Father, Jesus Christ and his word, a person who want to emout the two great commandments, mom/grandma, confident/helper/happy, slightly withdrawn trying to satisfy others, conservative Christian, average man/husband/father/person, Savior says I am valuable, smart/driven/devoted, profession/hobbies/nationality/personal values/education, educated/young/professional, compassionate/realistic/introvert, blessed/hard working/innovative, helper, provider/helpful/conservative, someone you can count on, dependable/reliable, by the amount of quality people in my life, caring/honest, carefree/honest/enjoy life, vocation, grateful person for many blessings, by how Christ like I am becoming, work/play hard and treat people fairly, what God has to say about me but put to much stock in what others say about me, by my accomplishments

**What do you define creative as:** how we put things together. anything can be creative, things outside of the box, process of thinking and making it a reality, ability to create, freedom to be yourself, making something, expressing talents God has given you, artistic. Creativity doing or thinking differently, brain activity, making dreams a reality, doing something out of the ordinary, me, ability to image or think, analyzing/solutions, ideas/solutions, cause something to exist. Someone who is good at creating, innovative, thinking outside of the box, to make or change something for aesthetic or practical improvement - a key attribute of humanity, someone who can think of things and carry them out, using inherent gifts and learned skills to create or manipulate something artistic, outside of the box ideas, thinking outside of the box, gifting, right brained activities, use of your talents/gifts to help others, The ability to bring life in any project/job/work you are doing, inspiration/ability to image and idea/vision come to life, being creative in taking current reality and doing something beneficial with it. Imaginative/curious/original/daring/conceptual, doing something different with your hands and mind, contributing to the world with your hands/mind/intelligence,

artistic/imaginative, imagination, understanding all aspects and developing all paths, ability to develop ideas using experience and imagination, new/unique approach to express ideas or beliefs, thinking outside the box, see beyond the current state and make change, new idea and/or change something in existence, the arts/science- new technology, medical breakthrough, having your own ideas, thoughtful/develop ideas, thinking outside, thinking outside the box, planning/executing a project, making each day a challenge, part self-discovery/understand new/deeper perspective, solving any problems that are encountered, expression of beauty in a concrete way, seeing or acting in a non-standard manner, artistic thinking outside the box, the ability to think outside of the box

**What is being creative:** being who we are meant to be. Anything you put passion in, seeing potential and help changing, process of thinking and making it a reality, doing many things, thinking out of the box, being artistic, opening up to let creativity come and flow, using your imagination, thinking, inventing, drawing, opening your mind to the possibilities and making them real, taking the extra steps, self expression, applying imaginations or thoughts, designing products. Making things work. Designing, writing/drawing/building/making something from nothing, seeing a need and acting on it, ability to create new things, to act upon creative ideas or impulses/to make new/to change or alter. Fulfilling the thought, acting out the creative parts of your brain into a new creation. Playing music/composing music/designing a new concept/drawing/painting/something from your mind, use of God's gifts, the ability to recognize your gifts and use them for God, ability to use your gifts/anointing, talents in the way God wired you. The act of creating/bringing to life an idea/expressing it/communicating it, being creative in taking current reality and doing something beneficial with it. Using your imagination and curiosity to make or do something, contributing to others – art/music, producing in some way, act of being artistic, imagination in action, allowing others to understanding what you want, understanding all aspects and developing all paths, ability to develop ideas using experience and imagination. Expressing ideas or beliefs in a new way, thinking outside the box/not taking conventional measures, thought and developing the thought, how to make something happen and doing it, unique ability to bring an to fulfillment for the benefit of mankind, following through on those ideas, advancing new ideas and plans, letting go and not staying in the lines, ability and interest in making projects, new ideas/being artistic/doing something different, willingness to act to express/show beauty/harmony leading others to insight, moving in a positive way, expressing yourself – getting out positive energy I a positive way, someone who develops new ideas, using your God given talents,

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Interviews**

#### **Interview #1, March 25, 2014**

#1. Male, 21-30,

Interviewer: How do you identify yourself religiously?

1. I am a Christian

Int – Do you identify yourself with a denomination?

1. No, no, non-denominational

Int – Evangelical, Pentecostal, Charismatic?

1. I identify more with the Pentecostal, Charismatic, description.

Int – Any particular reason for that?

1. It is not necessarily that I have done a lot of research into the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement or anything like that, but typically churches that are operating in the gifts of the Spirit, speaking in tongues, tend to think of them in those terms. So I guess I am defining it how others are defining because I identify with the movement.

Int – is it by family association or anything like that?

1. Yeah I would say so, my grandma

Int – now educationally wise you went to a higher form of education?

1. yes

Int – College?

1. Yes

Int - And you went for an advance degree/education?

1. Yes, Bachelor of Science in accounting, CPA.

Int – the question in the survey was how do you see yourself? What do you see yourself as?

1. First, I see myself as a child of God. All in all the things that come with that – healer, being creative. The perfect example of that is being a spiritual being, I see in the spirit, I see angels all of the time. Somebody who hears from God. I look at several instances throughout my life, especially recently, when the Lord speaks I hear, I'll always pick up on it more and more I'm learning to hear the Lord's voice. Learning more to operate in the gifts of the spirit but...how do I see myself, that's a very interesting question.

Int – It's open ended, I'm not trying to define you but trying to find out how you define yourself as. So you definitely see yourself as a child of God. How did you arrive at that was it something that you experienced or did somebody tell you that or, was it part of the teaching you had growing up in the church that told you that/

1. Part of it was teaching and the rest was experience where I started to see it for myself, like feeling the presence of God, or seeing in the spirit, or seeing angels that just makes it so, so real that, to the point that you realize the spirit realm is more real than the physical.

Int – do you see the spiritual and the physical as being separate?

1. No, no but, well, I see that the spiritual realm is something that people don't regularly see, they do exist physically here,

Int – do you see a difference of the natural and the supernatural ?

1. I'm not saying that the natural doesn't exist just that the supernatural is more powerful, more governance not the other way around.

Int – you really don't see a separation just a recognition of the two.

Do you have any other definitions of yourself? How do you define your existence, how do you define you?

1. I tend to fall into how other American's do, in defining themselves by what they do, so I think of myself as an innovator, an accountant, I want to be an entrepreneur, or those are the types of things that I think about when I think about me. That's what I want to do. You know what the bible talks about this would be a great wealth transfer, new inventions and things, that's the kind of thing I want to do. I want to help fund the kingdom. Bring money into the kingdom type of thing. It's kind of what I see myself as. As well as I think of myself as a worshipper, I love to worship, I enjoy the things I do in ministry type and just being part of the team, I do see myself as that as well as, I've done it for years and it's something that I enjoy doing.

Int – What would happen if your ability to do something – like your job – your avocation – like tomorrow you could no longer be an accountant – would who you are or how you define yourself change?

1. In some respects, in what you're saying, in the broader sense of being an accountant or entrepreneur, yeah it would change because a lot of my hopes and dreams are centered around that. If that were to go away, I would need something to hope and dream for.

Int – So your primary definition of how you see yourself is what you do not who you are.

1. I would say that is probably accurate. ... I would say that because a lot of our efforts as Americans is surrounding that we spend more time doing that then probably anything else for the most part so, yeah I would say that it is the same.

Int – What do you define creative as?

1. You know initially what you think of creative as you think of the arts, that kind of thing, but when I think about it a little bit more in some instances that we are all creative (because of some of your preaching), we create things with our hands, it is not necessarily the arts, so whatever we go about doing, we create things for example my home is me being creative, I see things in my mind, I create the environment that I see. So in some aspects of that I've changed my definition as a result of some things you have preached.

Int – Besides creating things, is there another definition you associate with being creative?

1. Well not really, I still think of the arts and creating something, like in music I create the sound of heaven that I feel that is in my head.

Int – do you feel a connection with something when you are doing this?

1. I would say a connection with something that I am doing, like worship type of stuff, not necessarily like I am going about like creating something like the example I gave you of my house or something I want to do in my house. I don't necessarily feel a connection to something when I am going about that. I don't know, you know, I see things in my head as I want things to be and I just go about doing them.

Int – you have more or less described creative as going about what you are doing, and do you see yourself as creative?

1. Yes I do.

Int – 100%, 40% , you don't have to qualify it, it is either a yes or no

1. I definitely feel that I am creative. To what extent that is really hard to say.

Int – Since you see yourself as creative, do you see yourself as having the power, power is ability in this context, to affect change in your life?

1. Yes Absolutely

Int – Why

1. That's another interesting question. Why do I believe I can affect change in my life? Because I believe the Lord gives us free will and as an applied force when you tap into that, you follow that, you absolutely have a lot of power to create the dreams and the visions and the things the Lord has given us. I think we have a choice. We don't have to fulfill those passions and dreams that the Lord has given us. But if we were to have those dreams to sit in our hands and do nothing, yeah, nothing would come about it. We don't pursue it, seek direction from the Lord and go after it,

Int – so basically it is a choice.

1. Yeah

Int – by making a choice you promote change.

1. Yes I would say that. Pursue and don't give up easily

Int – now taking that one up, do you see yourself having the power/ability to change others? To change other people's lives?

1. Not as much. Again, people do have free will, there is only so much that I can do affect change in another person, ultimately to create change in their life. I feel that we are limited. We can provide the message, the Holy Spirit can use us, the Holy Spirit has to do the work to affect change in their life.

Int – and going one up from there, do you see yourself having the power or ability to change the world?

1. Not as much because that is such a broad very high achieving concept, that is, almost to the point that it boggles your mind. It is something so significant, so important to have that kind of change. That's hard for me to conceive. Like maybe change my community, yeah I can see that. Affect change in my state, yeah maybe that but too much broader than that it gets hard for me to see.

Int – Curiosity, how do you see your world?

1. How do I see my world?

Int – Yeah, how do you define your world as?

1. How do I define my world as? Well there is a lot of beauty in the world but how do I see it more, more and more these days as going down the wrong path. Really the glory of God increasingly, seemingly, increasingly fast. Definitely the glory of God.

Int – Narrow that down a little bit.

1. Ok.

Int – Do you see your world as just you? Do you see your world as those around you? Do you see your world from a personal point of view? What encompasses your world? World meaning existence. What is your existence? What does it occupy? In other words if I said my world is my house and all the things that are in it – no other people, no other

things, it is just that and that is all there is. That is my world, just books. What do you define your world as around you?

1. More than anything I would say church and family because I view those things as most important things in my life. Not material possessions. It's family, friends and the ministry is such a large portion of my life

Int – so what you have just told me is that your world view is those directly involved in your family and those directly involved in your church

1. Yes absolutely.

Int – that is definitely how you view the world.

1. It has a large impact on that. My life in general – everything

Int – so if I asked you this question do have the ability not to change the world but your world would that have made a difference on how you would have answered the question.

1. Yes it would

Int – so would have the ability/power to change your world?

1. Yeah, I believe that.

Int – How would you accomplish that?

1. I think, well serving people, is a large part of it, that is why I am involved in ministry, I believe in the people, in the change of my life and those of others by serving others. I think that having that servant heart is really key.

Int – how do you define servant heart?

1. I would say being more concerned with people, with other people than you are about yourself. I'm learning to get to that point. It is not something that you do over night. Just learning how God sees other people, and seeing that for yourself. Seeing other people how God sees them is a big part of that. As dad has said and others as well that you don't go into ministry for yourself, necessarily but for the people around you and in addition to affecting change in your life as well.

Int – now to ask you the ultimate Jesus question, if Jesus appears to you tonight in a dream, and says specifically, when you wake up tomorrow, the past is completely gone, and everything that went wrong with your world is gone, everything that you could be held accountable is gone, now you have a clean slate, totally, what would you do?

1. First of all I would feel really good about that situation. The clean slate and everything. What would I do with that. I would look at myself differently. As far as that the Bible says that there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. But it is hard sometimes to get that out of your mind. I would definitely see myself differently. That would result in more boldness and have a lot of impact on the way I feel about living my life.



Int – Do you think that your religious beliefs help you with this or hurt you?

1. I think that religion has had a negative impact. Because I have grown up in religion and that is hard to shake. Obviously through the teaching of the ministry I am learning to bring my mind in line with that thought, focus on what you've done wrong in the past and religion drives that into you. So religion really does that to you.

Int – Given that question of Jesus – what would you do differently – if you had 24 hours to establish it differently? Unlimited possibility, no holds barred, you would have everything that you need at your finger tips to accomplish that mission.

1. Well I would definitely pursue dreams and visions that the Lord has given about or concerning failure – I would have boldness to pursue them. I would probably have more ability to be open. I think that there is a little bit of reserveness – everybody has a little bit of a face mask I guess about what people would think or say. If that is a clean slate none of that – no need for that.

### **Interview #2, May 5, 2014**

# 2 = Female, 21-30 = S

Interviewer: Going to ask you is fairly straight forward question about everything that you did on the survey, going over it to try to understand why people answered them the way that they are.

The first section was your name (demographic).....

So - The main question here is who do you see yourself as

2 - Okay. Ummm, Well. That's hard to answer

Interviewer: It's the first thing off the top of your head. There is no right or wrong answers. Number 1 - This is your opinion based upon your experience, that's not an accusation – Who do you think you are – it is more who do you see yourself as?

2 – (Interviewee's Name)

I – exactly who does (Interviewee's Name) define herself as.

2 – (Interviewee's Name) defines herself as... umm... I love caring for people and being a joy to people pulling out their best, so I am curious, I like to see what makes people them, I like to separate things as whether being inside or outside and I love being able to be there for people. So whether that means giving someone a wink across the room or giving someone a hug going or to Emily's concerts. I love to go on adventures. I

don't know – seeing new things, trying new things. I like to continue to grow. That's it. Does that work?

I – It works, Define yourself, Who are you?

2 – Define?

I – And if you don't know that is okay. Again there is no right or wrong answer. There is no pressure. If you honestly think you have no idea that's okay. It's fine. It is part of the process.

2 – Okay, I'm not quite sure. Can we come back to the question?

I – Yes. Do you define yourself as being creative?

2 – Do I define myself as creative – I think that can be a part of the definition

I – Okay let's clean that up a little bit. What do you define creative as?

2- Creative, taking something that exists and transitioning it or adding elements or taking elements away things to put it into a new something, something that is already pre-existing and you are adding to it or taking things away or taking several things together making up a whole new thing.

I – Do you see yourself or define yourself as being creative?

2 – See myself? .....Yes

I – Fine

2 – For real?

I – Yes

S – It's always changing. One of my patients told me an old Chinese proverb, one day you look at a mountain. One day a guy was walking along a road and saw a mountain and a river. The next day he was walking along the same road and did not see the mountain and the river. The next day he saw the mountain and the river. Why on the second day didn't he see the mountain or the river? Because the first day it was a mountain and a river, the next day it had changed. The third day he recognized it as because something inside of himself changed

I – Something within himself had changed and for the atmosphere around it. So he did not see it. That works.

2 – I don't know who said that or what, but I thought that it was very convenient.

I – You see yourself as creative, you defined what being creative is and you define yourself as being creative. Now with that do you see yourself having the power, power meaning ability, to change? To affect change in your life?

2 – Yes

I – Why?

2 – Because I have the power to make decisions and in life it is the decisions you make, you react to things and how you allow others to react to the things that you do or not do that changes the future. So because I decided and agreed to go to Africa and my mission trips I'm changed forever because of that one instance of standing in the kitchen saying give me the laptop I'm going to sign up. I think perspective also continuously changes and so whoever you think you are now isn't what you think you are. It's.... When I was a kid I thought that I was going to be a heart or brain doctor and since then I've changed through the years mindsets of what I wanted to be or who I wanted to be just because things around me have changed who I am and made this a little different.

I – Did it change who you were or what you wanted to do?

2 – Did what? My decisions

I – Yes

2 – Yes I think so because I think that because I decided to move out at 18, start work and go to college if I would have never left the house I would never be the person I am today, I might have gotten here but it would have taken me longer

I – So what you do determines who you are?

2 – To a point because I think the true essence of each person is ingrained in them and some things are never ever removed.

I – okay. SO the change doesn't change who you are?

2- I think the change can complement a person. It adds things to them, it adds perspective. But it doesn't change the initial person. Like it doesn't change their core of who they are – that is always going to be the same.

I – So it changes the way they react to who they are?

2 – ...Yeah. Not what they react to ....I think it has to do with the perspective of who you are. If you don't know who you are then your perspective of what you are capable of and who you think you are in that moment is... so if like you think you are dumb you are probably going to act as if you are dumb. But if you see the true potential in your intelligence then...

I – yes it still reveals a whole lot of the process of what you are thinking of what you think your identity is. So with that do you see yourself as having the power and again ability to affect change in the lives of others?

2 – Yes because we are speaking change as in affecting someone by affecting the perspective of themselves then yes.

I – Would you call that influence?

2 – Ummm. Possibly, I don't know if that is the best word. Shedding light on or

I – pointing a direction

2- Yes more so. Instead of influence it would be more of a reflection.

I – do you see that is more of influence rather than manipulation rather than a suggestion?

2 – I don't know....I think it is more... when you are ....thinking of a word, its coming...I think it's more like digging or like and archeologist – it's always there you are just bringing it to light. So when you are with someone and – I guess it would be.

I – okay

2 –That was a tough question

I – Do you see yourself as having the power or ability to affect change in the world?

2 – Hm – hmmm.

I – Why?

2- It's so easy to do that right now because of the internet and all these interconnecting – like I can talk to people in Singapore and Europe and Africa on a daily basis. It's so easy to connect to someone. I Skype with one of my friends from Texas and from Virginia and Alabama and like you know the US. I 've spoken to someone from South Africa the other day and it is so easy to connect with people, and so that face to face contact like we are having right now is accessible at home through a computer screen

I – Okay so there is a new social dynamic.

2 – Yeah

I – So community is not necessarily a geographical location as far as it is an electronic connection.

2 – Definitely. Like I've had kids who were sitting in the bush singing Justin Beber, if that gives any perspective. Like there were kids that were dancing in clubs dancing to American music that was on the radio just before I left. So I think that it's incredibly easy to change to influence the world .

I – good. So it comes back to who are you? So you have defined creativity, you've said that you are a creative individual who has the power to affect change not only in yourself but in others and in a worldwide context. So how do you define that as an identity or do you define that as an identity

2 – I'm thinking. Can you re-ask the question?

I – okay – what is your identity?

2 – Well, the identity itself is who I am. But I don't know if I completely know who I am. Just because of the fact that I grew up thinking my identity is what I did and who I helped and what I became. But my true identity is what I'd say is my characteristics of what makes me uniquely me. And so because of that I am a creative individual and I would say that it is part of my definition of who I am.

Question mark? I feel like there has to be a question mark at the end of that. I am not completely 100% sure what my definition is. A lot of that was I discovered a lot of what I wasn't this summer. I am slowly to beginning to see what I am.

I – let me ask you an outside the box question. When you were growing up did they ask you what your identity is or did they ask you what do you want to do when you grow up.

2- Who I wanted to be or do when I grew up but not who I was.

I – has any church ever asked you who you were

2 – NNNNo

I – has any school ever asked you who you were

2- kind of. I had a career development some sort of class in college that you had to do a presentation but it wasn't they asked you who you were, what made you, you, it was just a brief depiction but it was not necessarily who I was, it was all the things that I did.

I – all the things around you

2- yes that was what was accepted as the definition of who I was.

I- but they never really asked you what your identity was

2- No and I think that is why I am so uncomfortable with that question? Really because it is not an often asked question.

I – that's cool. It's okay, it is a rough question and concept.

2 - It is uncomfortable. I don't like it. Because we are brought up thinking that who we are is what we can accomplish and not... it completely erases every individuality off of us and puts us into a labeled position for authority or class and so once you are labeled you are no longer able exceed or you are not supposed exceed or far below that label. And so growing up we were poor and you know we were a single income family with four people. And you know I didn't have any hope of going to a college. I was accepted to several but I didn't think I could do it and I knew I couldn't afford it. So I didn't go. And then someone gave me the opportunity to make a... go to a better environment. And because of that shift that I accepted I was able to work and buy my first car on my own and go to college and graduate and go to all these incredible missions trips and accomplish a lot But

I – but is it who you are

2 – No, I've always been the same person but it's just my perspective of myself has changed as I have grown and my perspective of who other people are has changed as well so how I perceive them and react is different but the essence of me is still the same.

I – right but you don't know who they are either

2 – No . Right?

I – It's fine, it's good and I know that sounds absolutely horrible.

2 – it does but

I – but for what I am doing its great but for what you are doing its horrible.

2 – Well good, I'm happy for you

I – your pain makes my study that's cool.

2 - but in all reality I ... in all perspective of family and what my perspective of a family is, has drastically changed just because I am understanding my perspective of what my role is of who I was in a family, it was wrong. And that because of my perspective I was actually hindering and holding myself back from the true potential of what a relationship could be. So it reflects in many things not only in just a career or in whom I think I am it reflects in relationships and everything else as well.

I- Still uncomfortable

2 – Yeah but that's okay. It's a good uncomfortable. Because it is something I believe still needs to be spoken and asked more often because we should know who we are.

I – in church terms what... did they teach you that you were.

2 – I was a daughter of the most high God and that the kingdom was at hand – whatever that means. They were always good at throwing descriptions, very vague descriptions of who we were and never really individually breaking it down and saying this is who you are. So I think it was very generalized and very bland. I think growing up they say you could be a dreamer or a great prophet, a great speaker la-la-la-la-la but they never truly have an established way of showing you who you are, you're true potential and how that true potential can be used to expand God's kingdom and show people who He is and the love of the Father.

I – so they told you that you were a daughter of the most high God.

2 – Yeah

I – but not how to do that and what that looks like

2 – Yeah so I had to go in the middle of the African dirt sit there and cry for a long time to know that I was loved and to understand that God was not someone who was up in heaven and I was on earth and woe is me I don't have a father that is here. That don't tell you how to relate or have a relationship or how to - the list goes on and on. And so we have people coming to church who are so broken inside because they don't know who their father is and how to react, and how to have.

I – is it safe to say that the only thing that they see themselves is as broken

2 – Yes very much so because that is all that we are creating because we are only giving bread when you have the whole meal on the side....

I - interesting

2 - I think that there is so much more potential that is wasted in the children's and youth's ministry especially in the services because if – I mean my ideal is if it would be best to have a time when we get together where we are a main church – like the whole body. It should be something where people from the street could and learn and be able to begin to understand what their identity is. So I think that right now what is being spoken from all the pulpits is not all – you know it is just like water – it's watered down. Because you know it's frustrating.

(side conversation about my note taking that doesn't affect the outcome)

I - Is there anything else you want to add

2 – To what?

I – Anything. Any of the conversation

2 – I think that what we are teaching our children is awful> because we are teaching them that their identity is what they do and not who they are. And so when we teach them about the bible what God did and not why He did it or who he was in that situation or what his love for the people was. So instead of when Jesus did a miracle they look at the miracle instead of what God at that moment and Jesus chose to release them from their sins first often times but not only that but only that person healed and everyone around him was touched. Or that person healed and all around him was healed because the perspective of who God was and who the Son of God was.

I – so no matter how people are seeing themselves it is still broken

2- Yes

I – not totally redeemed

2 – No

I – not made in the image and likeness there of

2 – No, they see themselves as what can we get from the father, how can God help me in this situation, instead of before the beginning of creation God knew who I was, and he put inside of me all the things I needed for my whole entire lifetime. I love Psalms 139: 1-6 he talks about God proceeds and comes after me, he knows my thoughts before they are spoken knew my ways before they were thought - something. Or even this whole entire summer, literally, I was two and a half months stuck in Mark 11. Where it is Jesus coming into Jerusalem and he sends two disciples to go ahead and pick a donkey, mule that was never ridden before. So they go so it's not the fact that they go and they get it, it's the fact that they get it, He knew it was there, Jesus spoke and it was done. And they were obedient and they went, there was no questions asked. Where in the world would



you go and say I'm going to take your donkey Jesus is going to ride on it and the guy would be okay that's fine. Like that's crazy. That is just dumb. Then they – the disciples – the fact that the guy knew who Jesus was that was just incredible that he was just a simple man and they took the horse that was never ridden before so horses freak out on people when they've never been ridden before and they brought it to him and they put their cloak over top of him. And that was a representation of – that was their mantel. Like they were putting it over the horse and they also put it on the ground before him so it was above and below that animal and even though it was just a random horse that was carrying Jesus it shows that no matter where we go God is above and below us. Like he prepares the way before us and he is over us, Jesus is with us, walking, even though it was a glorious and incredible celebration it was just a random normal horse that was not broken it was still, I don't know if it was not broken it was, you know it was something, I still haven't gotten it yet but I am still in the process of it. I was just reminded of that on Sunday.

I – and they shall call him Emanuel- God with us

2 – does that work?

I – yes very well

### **Interview #3 – May 29, 2014**

# 3 Female – 40 - 60

I – As you know on the survey we had questions that started out with Who do you think you are and not in a derogatory way, what do you think your identity is?

3- That's really hard to answer, it's such an open ended question and I can fill it in so many different ways. I'm a woman, I'm a wife, I'm a mother, I'm an educator, umm I'm a conduit for people to explore parts of themselves that they never knew existed in terms of my ability of being an educator, a parent, a friend.

I - So with that, how do you define yourself then?

3- Without context that's hard. I define myself as a Christian, a wife, a mother, a professor.

I- So your identity is directly tied to your context.

3 – Yes well yes and No. There is a part of me that will always be the same outside of those contexts. Being fun and creative and you know intuitive. Those are characteristics that describe me in any of the relationships.

I – Oh, so you are saying there is a core essence that's not variable.

3 - Yes

I - And that is where you would draw the basis for your identity or it would be still contextual?

3 – I could pull it out of the context you know my essence who is (subject's name)?

I – Oh who is (interviewee's name)?

3- (Interviewee's name) is fun and exciting and adventurous, respectful, responsible, rebellious you know I could go on, activities.

I – Oh, alright, with that what do you define creative as or how do you define creative?

3- I define it as anything that occurs in the mind: thoughts, ideas, actions, they can all be creative.

I – There are no parameters for...

3- Yes there is but then again it's contextual. For example if somebody gets up in the morning and does the same thing every day, after a while that's not terribly creative but the day that they do something different, that is a creative act.

I – So it's not a pattern.

3 – Yes and then as I'm thinking that I am thinking in my mind that there are plenty of people who are incredibly creative who may, well no once you do it and over again and you don't find something new in it. There's got to be something new and different in it.

I – Oh, ultimately do you see yourself as creative?

3 – Yes

I – Why?

3 – Because every day I strive to be new and different, to do new and different things, to reach people in new and different ways, to find different ways to solve problems, to achieve goals.

I- Alright, understanding that, do you see yourself as having the ability or more succinctly to have the power to change?

3 – Yes

I – Why?

3 – Change happens with decision. When I am able to look at things differently I have a choice to make a change. For example, there was a time in my life where I would take a lot of things personally. I had the opportunity to work with somebody who said, “Well (interviewee’s name), what if you looked at your situation this way (.....) And I got to see it. It was like being outside of yourself and looking down and seeing it and saying I never realized that. And in that moment I had a choice. Do I remain the same or do I approach this differently and through doing that over time I see my relationships changed and I see that I am a completely different person than I was. You know 10-15 years ago, I mean I’m still changing. I’m still... A core of me is the same, that part I can’t change but what I can change is how I react and how I respond.

I – Do you see yourself as having the ability and power to change others?

3 – No

I – Why not?

3 – Change is a personal choice. I can lay out the reasons someone could change, why I would like to see someone else change. I can do that same thing that someone else did for me and spin things that people would see things differently. But the choice of changing is not up to me. I can only change myself.

I – Oh, but do you have the ability to influence change in other people?

3 – Oh, absolutely.

I – So, influence on the negative side

3- Sure

I – And, do you have the ability and power to change the world?

3 – I’d like to think so, I don’t know if that is a very um, I was thinking today about one of my heroes was Napoleon. He was very short but very determined and nothing got in his way and he felt like he had the power to change the world, which he did but his vision and the way he did it was very um, there was a sickness in the way he did it. You know I’d like to think that I’m not um, I don’t have that supposition. I can change the people I

come in contact with or give people I come in contact with feedback to help them change the way they do things in a more positive way and then and in so doing I influence that in children that have lived in my house. If I influence them, that will influence their children and will influence their children and then through that I can see change. Will I personally effectively see change in the world? Well maybe after my life is done. I don't know. Tomorrow I may be given the opportunity to go on an international ministry or on TV and I can say things that will change the world, I have no way of knowing.

I – But there is potential...

3 – Sure. Sure.

I – Now those are the standard questions asked and now I'm going to up it just a bit. Has religion ever asked you who you were or any religious organization?

3 – Well, an organization, no. People within an organization, yes.

I – How so?

3 – Um.

I – Did they ask you specifically what your identity was or did they ask you what do you do?

3- Well some asked what you what my identity was in Christ. I'm trying to think if I ever before I became a Christian if that was ever an issue. Like, who am I? I don't recall. My identity in Christ, recently, and this is not by any means mainstreamed Christianity but I have been challenged to...No one said who are you but they have said, how do you see yourself?

I – So it was a more

3 – a more reflective

I- more reflective than what you are

3 – Yes

I – It's almost as if you were, no I'm going to leave that one....In your schooling have they ever asked that question?

3- I can't recall. Um probably because the reason I think that at some point that's been asked because I know that I as a professor, one of the assignments that I give my students

is the first things we do is a collage, All About Me, it's called, where we present ourselves to our fellow students. They present each other to each other, who they are. I have to believe that I got that from somewhere, some educational something whether it be in learning about becoming an educator or when I was in in high school or in college. There had to be something, some kind of self-expression.

I – So it would be something to ask what are you going to be when you grow up or what are you going to do when you grow up rather than specifically who you are?

3 - Well of course, what you're going to be, what you're going to do. All that stuff yea, I don't know, I really can't say. You know. I don't remember everything I've ever been taught. But that's what I ask my students, I say show us who you are, and I can't imagine that I got that from, well maybe it is, you never know.

I – The search for something

I – Is there any type of thing that you would put forth in the context of the church? What you would like to see as far as an identity and/or discipleship program?

3 – Sure, Sure I mean um if I look at what I am doing right now, I am creating an afterschool program where that's what people are going to do. They are going to look at who they are, their creative identity and it's going to be within the church like. As far as the church like our church members specifically? Sure, I could see doing creative discipleship. But that's kind of what I want to do in my afterschool program.

I- So you see that as being a key as far as a creative discipleship.

3 – Yes,

I – You see creativity as a core element of an individual.

3- Oh! It is the core. It is the first creative act God created the world, the earth, and man and woman. And we are creative beings, it is just who we are. I think it is incumbent upon us to discover who we are through our creativity, I think that is key.

I – Cool, very good, that's it.

**Interview #4 – June 3, 2014**

Male – 40-60

I – Now, basic question. Oh? Who do you see yourself as? Who do you think you are? And I don't mean that in a negative way. You know (inflection) who do you think you are!! When somebody asks you who are you, how do you answer that question?

4 – I'm a person.

I – What type of person is that?

4 – A little loud, a little off the wall.

I – That's good, what else?

4 – I'm very confused at times. I guess I'm just human.

I – What does it mean to be human?

4- I just said it.

I – Good, how do you define yourself? And what I mean per chance, what I mean by that is what role do you see yourself as? In other words, if I say do you see yourself as a clown, do you see yourself as a relationship you have...

(phone ringing)

I – You can answer that...So, getting back to how do you define yourself?

4 – I'm a father, very confused at that at times. hard worker. I do things as I see fit, I try not to let others sway me, but they do. I don't know.

I – That's good, that's good.

I – Do you define or see yourself as creative?

4 – Yes.

I – Yes? What do you define creative as being?

4- Artistic, being able to create images in your mind and seeing them come to pass.

I – Good

4- I say that but at the same point, but I create the image and it doesn't come to pass and it defeats me.

I – So you consider that being creative is thinking something and putting it into reality?  
So it's definitely a thought based process.

4 – Oh, absolutely, it has to be.

I – It's not just exclusively mailing something....

4 – No.

I - Can you see yourself as creative?

4 - Yes

I - Why?

4 - I constantly want to invent something. I have... I wear a leg brace and the guy  
(worried on it? (this is hard to hear)

I have talked to him. What you need is something that has hydraulics in it. (hard to hear this)

Since then he's been fired. But I have this vision of a brace with hydraulics on it. I don't know how to go about doing it but I want to put it in. I have an old leg brace that I can work with... I want to put it on my workbench and put hydraulics in it. I have a need to invent something. I don't know why that is...

I – Cool.

4 – It necessarily doesn't have to be that, but something. I want to invent something.

I – But it doesn't have to be that...any other ideas you have?

4 – Not right off hand. I did have a one handed flosser. But right after I thought about it they put it on the market. And I'd never seen it before...but I walked in Walmart and there it is. And it was the exact image of what I had in my mind. I might have seen it before and just..., but it was about the time they came out with it.

I - Did that make you feel that what you could envision or see could be possible? That you were on the right track?

4 – Oh yeah.

I – So it was a positive experience?

4 – Yeah

I – Good. Oh, do you see yourself as having the power, and what I mean by the power is the ability to effect change in your life

4 – Oh, definitely.

I – How so?

4 – Because I did it with my degree, this was after I had become disabled, so before that I couldn't have done it and I just truly think I have been blessed with superior brain power after the accident. I think this disability of mine isn't something that is going to defeat me but rather help me soar.

And I don't know if any of this is true, (interviewers name). I am just talking out of my head.

I – No that's fine. That's good. Again, there is no right or wrong answer. It's not a true or false type of situation. It's how you think of things literally off the top of your head.

4 – That's exactly what this is.

I – Good. That's exactly what you need to be thinking. Now do you see yourself as having the power, again ability, to change, make change, or to affect change in other people's lives?

4 – In a, in this world, no.

I – No? Why not?

4 – I've ... too many failings in this world.

I – Hmm. So because you've had failures you can't affect somebody else's life...

4 – It's not the failings. It's just that people tend to want to stay away from me for some reason.

I – So that's not affecting somebody's life...



4- I guess that would be. But in the same sense..., I guess, I do have the ability to change someone's life. My son's just like me. To a point.

I – He seems himself as limited?

4- Yea, there is a lot of fear. And that's not only me, that's his Mom too.

I – Oh. And the final question, do you see yourself as having the power and ability to affect change in the world?

4 – Hoping to.

I – So it's a possibility...

4 - A possibility, yes.

I – How so?

4 – With my working abilities, with uh.

I – Oh, so it would be something you did rather than something that you said.

4 – I would think. Because, I don't feel my thoughts are important, worth somebody listening to, to change things.

I – So your thoughts are only worth something if they are turned into a product...

4 – It's not that, but it's being in the background, rather than in the front. That's why you don't see me in the front of the church.

I – Is there anything that you would like to add to any of this about who you think you are, or how you perceive yourself?

4 - Probably at a later time. When I have time to think about it.

I – Oh, excellent.

4 - To a point.

I – Do you see yourself as limited?

4 - Yes

## APPENDIX C

### Text of the Class

#### Who Are You?

The problem of the modern church is identity. Christian and non-Christians look virtually the same. Identity is the basis for order, function, and purpose. Society implies you must possess or be possessed by something to have an identity. If you have this, you can do this, so that you can be this. This is backwards to the biblical example of Jesus and God's intention.

## Introduction

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### Who Are You?

We hear the question so often enough, that we pay little attention to it when it is asked. We don't even really think of what we say when we reply. Most often we just supply our stock answer of our name. But does our name really define us?

Other times, when asked, we use the common phrase of I am just a \_\_\_\_\_. We usually fill in that blank with what we do for a living; dismiss it with our status in the family structure (father, mother, uncle, aunt, sister, brother, etc.), social structure (poor, middle class, and rich), ethnic group (Italian, German, and Nigerian), racial group or a title from a degree/politics/religion. Again, is this really who you are?

People identify themselves as a fanatic of a sports team, musical group, author, movie, or movie star. They identify themselves as members of organizations, sororities and fraternities – Moose, Elk, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, Mason, Daughters of the American Revolution, Alpha Gamma Delta, Alpha Phi Omega, and Alpha Delta Phi.

I have heard some people define themselves as a disease, a survivor of a disease, or a mental condition. People identify themselves as a physical limitation. But is this really who you are?

Finally, I have even heard where people define themselves as what they own or don't own. You know the type. They identify with a brand of product that they use or wear.

We really don't think of how we answer the question of "who am I", yet it really is a very important issue. The answer becomes how we define our lives. We inadvertently put limitations on ourselves by how we answer that critically important question defines how we see ourselves.

What would happen if anyone of these things I described were suddenly taken away? What would happen if you lost your ability to do the things that you claim as an identity? What happens if that sports team, musical group or club you belong to ceases to exist? What about the denomination that you belong to? Do you stop existing because these things have gone away or your ability to do them is taken away?

You have fallen into the common trap we all do. We confuse who we are with what we are and take that as our identity.

So what is your identity is not the question. Who are you is the question. When you know that – then what you are becomes obvious.

## You Are Not Your Job

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What would happen if tomorrow you woke up went to where you worked and found out that it no longer existed? It was shut down, closed and locked tight? Beside the fear of not having an income how would things change? Is your identity so wrapped up in what you did that you don't know what to do or who you are? Would you still be the person you thought you were or would you lose all sense of self and self-worth?

That is what happens to workers all over the world every day. Is their identity the same although they don't perform the task they had previously?

What if you are injured and can no longer perform the job, is your identity the same?

It has been reported that if you enter college or a trade school this coming semester with a particular job in mind, and train for that job; by the time you graduate in 4 years that job will not exist. Is your identity still the same now that the job is no longer available?

Society would have you believe that you are not. Your worth, your value, your identity in society is directly tied to what you do. And that is a complete lie. What you do does not determine who you are. That has already been determined. The problem is that no one has told you about your true identity. No you are not a superhero who was spirited away from some doomed distant planet that has yet to discover their superpowers. Sorry, that is not quite it. Close, but not quite.

For now know that you are not your job. Your job may change but who you are never does.

## You Are Not Your Circumstance

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The circumstance of your existence doesn't determine your identity. Merriam-Webster defines circumstance as a condition or fact that affects a situation. Basically it is the way something happens. It is the specific details of an event, ones that you cannot necessarily control. These then are the things around you, but are not you. Some of them you have chosen and others you have not. You did not decide how and when you were born. You did not choose the place, the economics, or any other portion of things that surround your birth. Just like living in a garage, sitting in a chair with a steering wheel in

your hands and saying “vroom, vroom,” doesn’t make you a car. Your circumstance does not determine who you are.

Some circumstances are the result of actions we have chosen to take. Some of it’s kind or cruel, law-abiding or criminal and a host of other similarly labeled actions but they do not truly represent who you are. All of those things are things you can attach to yourself or put on but they don’t represent your true identity.

As you can tell, I am depending on a lot of definitions but with good reason. We have a tendency to use language very loosely or alter the meaning drastically from its original intent. We don’t really think about what we say or how we say it. From this study you can begin to see why the bible says that the power of life and death are in the tongue and then gives the admonishment to choose life. Definitions are critical to fully understand how we do things to ourselves and let others do things to us, purely on what has been spoken over us. We, unfortunately, take those words to be who we are. Through those words we become something we were never meant to be.

## You Are Not Your Condition

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Condition is a unique word in that it is a descriptive noun. In Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, condition is a way of living or existing. It is the state in which something exists therefore it is the physical and/or a mental state. But it is not who you are. It is a description of how things are being lived out by your identity not as part of your identity.

Living in a large house doesn’t mean that you are wealthy or living in a small home doesn’t mean that you are poor. Appearances can be deceiving. The condition of you living in the large home may be that it’s your job to house sit and care for the property while the owner is away. You may be living way beyond your ability to ever fully own that home. Just as living in a small home doesn’t mean that you are poor. It may mean that you don’t wish to spend the money on taking care of a larger home and want to save money for something else. The conditions of how you live in that house doesn’t determine who you are.

## You Are Not Your Culture

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Culture is something that you are born into though sometimes you get to choose it. Culture is something that plays an incredibly large role that influences the way we do things. Culture is defined in Merriam-Webster as the beliefs, customs, arts, etiquette, speaking, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time. That particular society has its own beliefs, ways of life, art, and its own ways of thinking, behaving, or working. This extends to the places of work or organizations that you belong to. These are things that people, over time have agreed to so that they can identify others who are in that culture. These are tools to start from – not necessarily stay in. Culture is the boundaries of operation.

Culture is a point of view. A place from where you have a reference point to compare things. Culture is a place to begin to understand something, or how things work together. Really, it is a group of people with similar sensibilities gathered around similar ideas and concepts and deciding that this is the way that they are going to interact together. To operate in a different way than these prescribed measures is to operate outside of this culture.

Let us examine a case in point like a particular form of dressing. If a person wears a wide brimmed Stetson, a pair of Justin's boots, Levi jeans, a revolver strapped to their side, standing next to a horse, with a lariat in their hand you would assume that the person wearing them would be a cowboy (technically a drover because cowboy is really a derogatory term). You would assume this especially if that person was standing out on the plains and there was a herd of cattle nearby. But what if they were in the middle of Central Park in New York City, would you then say that this person is still a cowboy?

You are not your culture. It is something that you put on and take off. It can be an expression of who you are but it is not at the core of who you are.

What we have described here are just the things you have to work with to start and not necessarily to finish with. You are not your race, religion, ethnicity, culture or education. You are not what society, family or friends tell you that you are.

Well, great – then WHO AM I???!!!!

This is the right question. People have been told what they are by the color of their skin, their religion, country, culture, and education. This has been passed on to you by very well-meaning people who honestly believe that they are doing you a favor by pronouncing these things over you. The problem is that they are passing along items that have been pronounced over them. They were told that this was what they were too.

Most times these are the things that actually do help you understand what to do in social and cultural situations. You are good because ....., You are pretty/handsome because..., You are talented because....., You are a hero because....., and a hundred other variations based upon things that you did, performed, said or didn't do. They are attributes of what you are – but they are still not who you are. They are what you do to show who you are.

Yes, there are other times when not so well meaning people have pronounced these things over you as well. Unfortunately the brain is wired for survival. When something negative happens – we remember it vividly so that we can avoid it the next time. That is why we dwell on the negative and not the positive. We remember these negative things in great detail so we can survive. We can describe the time, the place, the circumstances, the people involved, the weather and everything associated with it in great and painful detail. Dan Brown has stated “Men go to far greater lengths to avoid what they fear than to obtain what they desire.”

You have seen them and heard them all. You are: no good, a liar, a cheat, ugly, stupid, dumb, just a..., a pain in the \*\*\*, racial slur, physical attribute, sexual organ, a bigot, a criminal and a thousand other derogatory remarks. They are made to rob you of your true identity and make you less than what you truly are. It is so that you are easier to control and perceive yourself to be powerless and worthless because you are just a \*\*\*\*.

We, unfortunately, allow these things to define who we are by saying this is what we are. What we are, is not who we are!

## Genesis – The Blueprint

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### **Biblical Foundation**

For the purposes of the discussion, I am using the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

In the beginning (or rather as our worlds were beginning to be put together at birth) there we were with all the possibilities before us. We were the children of promise – blank canvasses and untouched marble. As children of promise our existence was full of unlimited possibilities and un-conformed to society's demands. We looked at this world from a point of view that the world around us met our needs. That is if we were privileged to be a part of a wealthy community and if not, our world was a little smaller but the possibilities were still the same. The limits of our imagination had not been explored. This didn't continue unfortunately. Before we were born "they" (culture and society) already a plan in mind for us. When we could begin to understand how to put things together, there came a time and place where cultures and societies tried to mold us into their image and likeness. They wanted to perpetuate their limiting concepts, morals, philosophy, and religious repressions; worker bees for the good of the hive. It becomes a question of what do you want to be when you grow up not who are you. Your value is not in who you are – it is in what can you produce.

I know that this sounds extreme, but when you come to look at the complete picture it stares back at you with a very large, sinister grin. How can this be? When did this happen? It happened because of the way we look at ourselves and how others have passed down their distorted image of themselves and society. It starts with the largest moral compass that we have – religion.

If you are a Christian, it starts at the beginning – literally. We have a tendency in Christianity to skip over a very important piece of scripture that sets the stage for understanding what the rest of the book is about – who we are and our relationship with God. If you had been exposed to Christianity at an early age, you probably remember the first bible or Sunday school class you were exposed to. It probably featured a man and a woman, standing behind some strategically placed foliage, next to a tree that had apples hanging from it and would probably feature a snake wrapped in the branches.

This is where the problem starts. The church just skipped over the introduction that sets up the plot for the entire collection of books we call the Bible. If we do see the first chapter of the bible it is usually in a very quick listing of what was created on what day and then move very quickly to the second chapter of Genesis. Here they skip over the first four verses to get to more detailed account of the creation of humanity. They spend a little time there so that they can rush to Chapter 3 and see how humanity blew it all. There in Chapter 3 they spend the most time so that they can tell you how horribly

broken and sinful you are. In fact they spend days on it. It is always brought up in some form or another of how sinful humanity is and how rotten to the core we are. That is, unless you join our organization and tithe! Then you are good to go because you have the ultimate fire insurance, get out of jail free card and a mansion on the other side when you get there.

The immediate problem with this is that we are constantly focused upon the broken image of Adam and Eve rather than the original image of God in whom we are all created. You can't fix something if you don't know what it was to begin with! You have no idea what you are aiming for. Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 2:4 is the complete blue print of what the whole of creation was supposed to be.

**Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 2:4 is the complete blue print of what the whole of creation was supposed to be.**

A broken image presents a whole host of issues that are difficult to deal with and overcome. With this broken image it is tough to even begin to imagine that we could carry out the commands of Jesus (Matthew 10:7-8; 28: 19-20, Luke 16:15), let alone the proclamation of Luke 4:18 – 19/Isaiah 61:1-2. From this broken image, we cannot understand that creation, thus creativity, as described in the first chapter of Genesis is the full concept of the power (*dynamis*) of God given to us to create and transform all of creation. We do not understand that we have been given the authority to use that power for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God. To complicate matters even more, add to this a rejection of the early Hebrew understanding of Genesis with our 2000 years of over intellectualized concentration of the fall of man; we lose the complete focus of a completed and whole creation.

**Matthew 10:7-8** As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." **8** Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

**Matthew 28:19-20** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

**Luke 16:15** So he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.

**Luke 4:18-19** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the

blind, to let the oppressed go free, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

**Isaiah 61:1-2** The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; **2** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

We really need to spend more time closely reading the text of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. The reason for this is so that we understand the full picture of what Jesus did to redeem and restore humanity's original identity. We need to begin to fully understand the redemptive image of God as claimed and proclaimed through Jesus as the originally intended image of God. That is where we are to find our true identity.

When closely looking at the first chapter of Genesis, you begin to notice patterns in the text. First there are seven major cycles of events that can be established as the seven days of the creation cycle. In the appendix (page 26), I have broken things up into a table so that you can see them easier. This is a technique used by bible scholars to closely examine the text for things that you would not normally see. It is a visual aid but not the only one. I thought it would be helpful to look at it this way for our purposes.

**When things are repeated they are important to pay attention to. It is there not by mistake or convenience but by design to make sure you get the point.**

Now if we look again we also see that within the cycle of the day there exist other events that need careful consideration. I've broken them down for you in the chart by the thick black lines in each day. Here are the sections as broken down by days: first and second - 5, the third and fourth - 9, the fifth - 5, the sixth - 12, and the seventh - 3 separate sections. When you look at it this way, each day and occurring sequence has something that is extremely important to the outcome. There is more to see than God popping out sections of the universe.

Next, in the close reading of the text, one sees the repetition of word(s), concepts and phrases: "God said" (10), "Let there be" (3), "let" (9), created/create/made/make (10), "separate(d)" (5), called (3), "be fruitful and multiple and fill" (2), "and God saw that it was good" (7 - first occurrence as light being good, last very good), "And there was evening, and there was morning, the ... day" (6), "and so it was" (6), image (3), dome (7), night (4), and day (4). waters (11), light (12), darkness (4). All of this can be broken down into categories of activity, things activated on, and results thus having an impact upon how the text/story is viewed. When things are repeated they are important to pay attention to. It is there not by mistake or convenience but by design to make sure you get the point.



When you combine all of these things it gives you the idea that this is something bigger than a plain story of how the earth came to be. It is more than a stage being made ready for a cast of actors to produce a pleasant introduction of how it all came to be before the plot twist is announced. It is more than just the origins of the species. It gives you the identity of the creator, and it gives you the role that each element and creature of creation is to be. It gives the identity of humanity as designed. And it gives you an important question to ask so that further on in scripture it can be answered, “Why did God create the whole thing.”

**“Genesis 1:1** In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup> the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.’

Here we have a generalized statement of time, nothing specific, but somewhere at the start. This is in keeping with the understanding of the people of the time that this was written. They were the ones who wrote it down or passed it orally to the next generation. It also gives us a major indication as to the personality of God. This first indication is important and needs to be dwelt upon. Our first revelation of God is as the Creator. Not only is God the Creator but we are invited to view the act of creation as it is occurring. God wants us to know God. It also makes the assumption that God did in fact exist before this act of creation. It is a glimpse of the true nature of God. This will come into significant play for the rest of this reading. God is the Creator, God has existed before the beginning and God is actively involved in the continuation of the creative act as well as with the created.

Genesis 1: 1-2 presents us with a picture that is often overlooked. First we are presented with the idea that we are at a moment (which specific one is not indicated, but one in which we can understand the process – so we can know God) when God was creating a particular aspect of things. No hour of the day, no segment of time as indicated on the face of the clock is mentioned; no calendar is alluded to – just a section of the succession of events that something had been going on. Why isn’t an exact time given? Because it doesn’t make a difference to the purpose of the story. It would be as if we stepped into a craftsman’s shop as he is in the process of making something. It already started.

The earth as presented in these two verses was “a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep”. From this we can see that the first steps of creation have already been set in motion. Not only that but we are presented with an earth that is without order. It already existed at the point where we joined the story. Here is the important part to understand – the earth was not anything that we would recognize. It is not yet what we now are familiar with or as what we would call this “third rock from the sun.” The full purpose of creation is as of yet to be organized and not in a usable form for the creatures God would place upon it.

We have a tendency to impose our way of thinking upon what we read. This is not a great way to read the bible or any book written long ago. This is because they didn’t think the way we do, look the way we do, or act the way we do. There are certain things

that we have in common but not from the same perspective. We have to take into consideration how they see things first. This will help us understand and relate those things. It is walking a mile in their shoes. Not the other way around.

According to the *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, from all indications the people in the ancient Near East did not think of creation in terms of making things. To them that was not being creative. That is how we think of creation now but this was not how they thought of it then. To them being creative was bringing order to things. I will explain this more just a little later. This is very important to understand: the people who wrote the account down or who told the account of creation (thousands of years ago) understood that it was not about making things. It was about bringing order to the cosmos from its chaotic and nonfunctioning condition.<sup>1</sup>

**Time was not of concern but rather orderliness, purpose, function and condition. It is not so much what was created but for what reason.** So when you look at verse one the heavens and earth existed but had not yet given their purpose. God was still in the process of giving order and purpose to what had been made. This is illustrated in verse two in the condition of the earth during this period of the narration and the fact that God was still active in God's encounter with the earth as a wind sweeping over the face of the waters.

We have come to learn that the writers of other culture's creation stories all started from the same basic understanding. Other ancient peoples and traditions do not begin their story with something already there. They start with the world not having order, function or purpose. Only when given their order, function and purpose have they been created and creation has taken place. For them, this is how you give things their existence. This doesn't mean that things had not been shaped or the universe was empty. The Hebrew words *tohu wabohu* (formless and empty) confirms the idea that the universe was empty of purpose, meaning and function and not empty of matter. The word *tohu* refers to whether something is or something isn't there. Examples of this would be such things as worth, purpose, truth, or integrity.<sup>2</sup>

One of the definitions for the word void is being pointless, being ineffective or useless. When formless, meaning shapeless and disorganized is placed in front of void, it emphasizes the condition. Those two words put together are double the impact to make sure you get the point. The situation is in constant change. Everything is flowing one to the other without any clear identity. It has no borders to separate one element from another. Here is something else to consider, one of the aspects of early Hebraic culture is that when you name something you have power over it. For the people in the ancient world when they gave something a name they gave it its function. A name was the very essence of what was named. When you said the name, you created what was spoken. In

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<sup>1</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, and David W. Baker, (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP, 2003 Pages 161-162

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 156 -157

Genesis God starts the act of creation and finalizes it all by giving it its name. That is when they are brought into a functional existence.<sup>3</sup>

At this point nothing has been named other than the generality of the heavens and earth. So placing the two words together indicates that the earth at its inception was a shapeless and disorganized useless entity, not ready yet, and at this point not suitable for its intended purpose. The *Geneva Bible* calls this a disordered mass maintained by the power of God.

So to review, at this point in the narrative, in the modern terms, we have already joined the program in progress. The earth exists not in a form that we can readily relate to or understand. It was there, named but not organized or ordered. It was conceptual (meaning a broad abstract idea or a guiding general principle; nothing exact). At what time the earth existed is not clearly presented nor does it matter. We can see that God was at work as God had put into action “a wind” that enveloped the surface of the waters thus giving the beginnings of its boundaries. God, in God’s infinite abilities, had bound creation altogether.

Wind in this case has been translated in other ways but the most significant is from the Hebrew רוּחַ *ruwach* {roo'-akh} meaning - wind, breath, mind, spirit. It is most commonly translated as Spirit in reference to God. Thus the Spirit of God was responsible for containing it. For how long or when it began is not mentioned. For the purpose of this story it is not important. There is no indication of human time points – no third hour of the first day, noon, 5:30 p.m. or any other such reference. The only thing is that God was in the process of creating and the creation was conceptually a reality, in no particular definable form, but still there. It was a disorganized mess. We are at the doorway of phase one – the organization of the physical properties of the earth.

Now most time in the Old Testament the words *ruah Elohim* means the spirit of God and not a supernatural wind. The idea of the wind in scenes of chaos is recognized throughout Near East and in the Bible. When you look very closely at the Israelite’s understanding of the Spirit of the Lord and what that means when you use the word hover, it leads us to understand that the earth was not functional. Instead it was chaotic, in a primal condition, a watery darkness and a supernatural wind that was endowed with the power of God that went around and above the surface of the waters.<sup>4</sup>

At this point you may be wondering when we’ll get back to matters of identity. I agree that it is taking a long time to get around to that point. The purpose of all of this is to rebuild our corrupted understanding of creation. Each element is important to how we will perceive what the identity of humanity is all about. We need to understand the patterns that are here. The purpose of all of this will become evident when we fully explore the first 34 verses of the book of Genesis. We have jumped to too many

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>4</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, and David W. Baker, (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP, 2003 157-158

conclusions by skipping over these verses. So for the clarity of purpose, we will go slowly.

The first act of the organization of physical properties begins with verse 3 and the word – “then”, וְ (particle conjunction)– as indicating a change is about to happen. It introduces a result from preceding circumstances, it is a connection. There is not much mystery. We are at the point where the action begins for our purposes of understanding.

**Genesis 1:3** Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

God at this point had caused something to happen – to shift from a formless void with darkness covering its depth to one that had light. In other words we are given the action that set things into motion but we are not given the transitional organization process. He simply spoke it and it was accomplished. That creative spoken word of God is not just an activation of the potential but it is an act of making into.<sup>5</sup> The how of accomplishment was not exactly mentioned. The important thing to understand here is that we are witness to the action that is accomplishment.

The process is not the focal point of the narrative but rather an indication that there are other things to occur and God was in the process of creating. No source of light was discussed, and it is simply that God had separated it from the darkness. It must be mentioned that this was before the sun or the moon were created, and therefore, not a part of the process. It was a calling out into being for examination.

**It is our belief that we can hide something within the darkness but the truth of God illuminates it all. Nothing is hidden from God.**

The darkness חֹשֶׁךְ (*hōshek*) darkness, is not defined here. It is not suggested as to what it might be other than an enveloping condition. Darkness at this point may indicate an obscurity – something that is seen but not understood, compiled but yet unobservable, collected but not organized. Throughout the bible the understanding of pulling something into the light means that you make it known, understood, observable and categorized. In all of the examples of the bible, and within the context of the text, God already knows. It is our belief that we can hide something within the darkness but the truth of God illuminates it all. Nothing is hidden from God.

*Lustration* is a Latin word that is still in modern use (though rarely except politically). It means to bring things to light or let it be known, to be examined. In the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *lustration* comes from the Latin word *lustratio* meaning purification by sacrifice. In ancient Greek and Roman religious practices it was a process where individuals or entire communities would rid themselves of any ceremonial impurities or simply from the profane and ordinary state which made it dangerous to go anywhere near or come into direct contact with sacred objects or perform sacred rites.

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<sup>5</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, and David W. Baker, (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP, 2003 158

You achieved this by sprinkling with or washing in water, or rubbing it with substances such as blood or clay. You could also add to this process confessing sins and even total fumigation to insure that things were ready.<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note that the synonyms for the word lustration are: ablution, absolution, atonement, baptism, bathing, catharsis, depuration, disinfection, distillation, expiation, expurgation, forgiveness, grace, lavation, laving, purgation, purge, purifying, rarefaction, rebirth, redemption, refinement, regeneration, salvation, sanctification and washing.<sup>7</sup>

So when we look at this verse from the understanding of how ancient people might understand this passage of scripture, we can draw the following conclusions.

Light in this context takes on the property of pulling something from obscurity into the realm of becoming obvious to us. It then pulls it into the realm of knowable things. God already knew what was there but separates into a form that we can understand, given purpose, and identity. The physical properties were not discussed. Precise measurements were not given. The source of the light was not debated nor the time needed to separate it out from the darkness. Simply God said it and it was done. Things were not ready to be placed in their intended place and purpose. They were ready to be created, ready to be known.

When God saw this come into the organized structure, God determined that it was properly placed in sequence. God separated the light from the darkness. God removed it from a chaotic state with no purpose or function and placed it where it now had purpose and function. With our new understanding, we can now say that it was created. This is further supported in Genesis 1:5 by God naming the sequence as Day; indicating the process is done. The light, or the ability to be known, was defined as Day and the ability not to be known as Night, by which it was defined by the darkness.

Now notice there are no means of measurement before this point. God defined the light as the ability to be known. That measurement is in God's definition not ours. God at the end of the sequence gives it borders to contain it, restrain it and define it. He gives it purpose for our benefit. The sequence starts with the object being identified, activity being done and then placed within its permanent border – the day. But the sequence is not completed yet until:

**Genesis 1:4-5** And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/lustration> May 7, 2014

<sup>7</sup> [http://thesaurus.com/browse/lustration?](http://thesaurus.com/browse/lustration?__utma=1.1183389624.1395765366.1399480066.1399483150.5&__utmb=1.3.8.1399483150&__utmc=1&__utmx=-&__utmz=1.1395765366.1.1.utmcsr=(direct)|utmccn=(direct)|utmcmd=(none)&__utmv=-&__utmk=54041000)

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There was evening and then morning. So from the outset, detailed time accounting was not part of the narration other than a space for the beginning and end of the sequence. We then can conclude that it plays no significant importance to the outcome of events other than to give a sense of order and purpose. This releases us to look at the entire process as a flowing piece of order and purpose.

The following is speculation on my part but it is a point to be considered. It would logically make sense that God would be able to accomplish all at once. God truly does not need a sequenced order of events to produce the end result. So we have to ask what is the purpose of the narrative? The purpose of the narrative is to place the entirety of creation within a sequenced order that we can understand, comprehend and ultimately use for our benefit. God needs no such constraints. God might have placed it for our understanding.

The time element is so we can understand the point of the story. Remove the time elements and the story still stands. That is an important factor. The time reference of a day plays no significant factor when removed from the story. The concept of time is there as an orderly observable event. It does not give order, function or purpose to what has been created. The story is not added to by precise time or overly influenced by its absence. Our understanding is enhanced but not to a degree that would make it an essential point to the narration. It is necessary for our comprehension of an ordered occurrence because we live in time. God does all of this outside of time to affect/effect the things of time.

If you want to look further into this, read the beginning of the gospel according to John. This ties it all together rather nicely. **“John 1:1-5** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

**Genesis 1:6-8** <sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup> So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the dome sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

It seems a small point but notice that the act of creation precedes the time reference as to what day it is. There almost seems to be a separation. God speaks, the action occurs but there is no time reference until after the act of creation is completed. Then and only then is the sequence defined as a particular reference of time – the second day. The act is defined by surrounding it with a place – something that we recognize as a day. The second day did not exist until God placed it and named it. God is the one who defines the sequence and then places it within our understanding.

Now that we are free to look at the sequence of events rather than its precise time the story takes on a different character. You can see the movement of creation in a

process that goes from a large picture or conceptualization to an orderly progression to an assignment of purpose. Let's re-start our investigation so we can see what is going on when God says let there be light. We start with the first occurrence in the sequence of removing a source of illumination from within the entirety of the concept, to begin the process.

The source of the illumination/light is not defined. We do not know what the source of the light was. However the same word is explained by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:6 as "For God, who said, 'light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Therefore, light can be knowledge, especially concerning the glory of God.

Light in this passage and in 2 Corinthians appears four times. In the Greek it is *photismos* meaning illumination and used as light. In chapter 4 verse 4 light is used twice and it is *phos* whose original use was light or daylight but its use is as fire, firelight, light, and lights. It is referenced in Gen 1:3 (b) 2Pe 1:19 (c) Act 26:18; 2Co 4:4. The second use in that line can mean 1) *Lit age* (2) Or *that the light...image of God, would not dawn* upon them (a) Joh 12:31 (b) Mat 13:22 (c) 2Co 3:14 (d) Act 26:18; 2Co 4:6 (e) 2Co 3:18; 2Co 4:6 (f) Joh 1:18; Phi 2:6; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3 as documented in Strong's. In verse 6 it has the same meaning as in (a) Gen 1:3 (b) 2Pe 1:19 (c) Act 26:18; 2Co 4:4.

**Genesis 1:3** Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

**2 Peter 1:19** So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

**Acts 26:18** to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

**2 Corinthians 4: 4** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**John 12: 31** Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out.

**Matthew 13:22** As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.

**2 Corinthians 3:14** But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside.

**2 Corinthians 4:6** For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 3:18** And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 4:6** For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**John 1:18** No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

**Philippians 2: 6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

**1Colossians 1:5** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;

**Hebrews 1:3** He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

So you see, for our understanding this light was to shine the light of understanding upon the whole order, function and purpose of what was created.

Here one might suggest something that is not directly supported by the text of Genesis. It is suggested by the context of how light is used throughout the rest of the bible. Merging the two definitions of light together we may get a sense of what light is to mean and how it was used when the text was written. You could go further and say that God, at this point in the story, makes it all evident through the revelation what God is doing. God brings it out of this mass of chaos and places it for all to see and become aware of, so that its original intended order, function and purpose are revealed.

To place creation within our modern human terms is necessary for our point of understanding because we can begin to see the similarities in ancient points of view. As we understand the act of creation, it takes place within the interior dark and hidden places of the human mind. It is not shared and it does not have an existence of itself. It is not ordered. It does not have a function nor does it have a purpose. It is not part of a common reality. However, once we begin to speak of, write down, share or allow it to be seen; it can be ordered and placed within its proper position, place, function and purpose. It is activated to have power and that is the power to be what it is designed to be.

In Hebrew, אור *'owr {ore}* stands for the light but also means the light of instruction. Instruction is order – a statement of what must be done with authority or as an order. Instruction is a command. God commanded it – spoke it into existence. I am trying to point out that what we are seeing in the text is the entire concept being brought out into an atmosphere where it can be readily seen. Once something can be seen it can be understood because it can be examined. Again, this plays an important part in understanding human creativity.



**These are the important first steps in creating the environment where things can be placed upon the canvas of existence.**

In any creative endeavor we start with the concept – the need, or desire to do. Then the point becomes what is it that you do or simply what is it that you want to create? You start with the larger concept of I want to draw, to paint, to compose, to cook, to diagram, to formulate or any one of millions of expressions of the creative aspect of our existence. From there we further define what it is we wish to do – the subject matter. Once the subject matter is decided upon we go about deciding how to put it together. Then we go about performing those actions necessary to place those items in order so that the concept comes to full realization.

These are the important first steps in creating the environment where things can be placed upon the canvas of existence. Here is where the background story is being produced. The scene is being set for the narrative to take place. We are seeing a larger picture developed into sections of existence.

**Genesis 1:9-10** And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

The ancient societies had similar concepts of creation – what we would call the universe – in terms of a limitless ocean that wasn't yet divided, a primordial soup. Most of the societies of that time had some form of this concept. In researching mythologies, especially in the Greek, Roman and Babylonian, you will find the common theme of bodies of water emerging/emanating from the body of a god. The usual methodology was to divide the body of a god through a violent action by another deity. You can readily find this type of mythology within the Babylonian creation epic, *Gilgamesh* and the *Enuma Elish*. The Babylonian god Marduk leads the gods in a battle against Tiamat. When Tiamat is slain, her body is opened and water flows out of various orifices and the remains of her body become the mountains from which water flows. From her eyes it is reported that the Tigris and the Euphrates flow. <sup>8</sup> Ancient Hebrew society did not carry such a notion. They believed that it was God working upon something that was outside of God. God was not God's creation. God's identity was not dependent upon it as had the other cultural gods. From the concept of the Genesis narrative you could say that it was the environment being further defined and refined. Notice the generalization. No specifics are given as far as organization. Everything is given in general terms and in larger categories. The details are absent. These are things to be experienced later. We are working from a larger proportion to the smaller details.

When one creates a painting one blocks in (holds in reserve) large portions of area to define where things are to be. Detail is left out yet one gives them the beginnings of

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<sup>8</sup> Matt Wiebe, *Creation Myths of the Ancient World*, page 431, [religionandnature.com/ern/sample/Fiala-CreationMythsAncientWorld.pdf](http://religionandnature.com/ern/sample/Fiala-CreationMythsAncientWorld.pdf), April 17, 2013

borders so that they can be placed and detailed according to their purpose and where they are in relationship to other elements and light. This again is a key concept to the overall production of the completed project. Is it necessary to add every detail to the painting to make it understandable? The answer is a definite no. The key to a good painting or story is as much what one leaves out as it is how much one puts in. One alludes to the subject matter with broad strokes. The painter does not need to detail the entirety of the trunk of a tree to know that it is under all of the leaves of the tree. The artist reveals portions of it to hint at the structure. The mind fills in the rest. The detail is the responsibility of the observer. It is not the single element that needs to be revealed but the total concept and purpose.

At this point I defer to Francis A. Schaeffer. In his book, *The God Who Is There*, Schaeffer makes a point that every detail and aspect of creation is not needed for us to fully understand the story. Part of the responsibility for the discovery of the total narration rests upon us. As such, God does not communicate all things to us. We, who are created in the image and likeness of God, are intended to explore and discover the things of creation – the thumb print of God. God provides us with a basic knowledge, but not a complete knowledge. This is the purpose of scripture – a hint. The ultimate truth then is in the relationship with God.<sup>9</sup> As it is with any great painting, the information alluded to is for us to discover and place as it was for the artist to hint at it.

This then further releases us to search within the expanse of God's creation for further understanding as to who God is. God has placed within God's creation markers that point the way to God, for us to wonder, ponder and examine. God does this as a way of deepening our relationship with God. It is an invitation mutual of pursuit.

So as we journey together in scripture, we are commanded to look for the truth that supports and undergirds the entirety of scripture and God's creation. The truth is in scripture and in the world – exactly in the whole of creation. Most importantly it is in our relationship with God and what God speaks to each one of us as being our purpose. One will not contradict the other because they are of God. It is where we have interfered that there is confusion. God is in continual relationship to and with creation. God provided for our redemption and empowerment. All of it will be placed back in order, function and purpose as originally designed. It is our duty then to go forth and seek the totality of truth contained in the narrative as made evident in creation, in our relationship with God, others, in scripture and God's word spoken to us directly.

**Genesis 1:11-13** Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so.<sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.<sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

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<sup>9</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer. "The God Who Is There", 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ed., Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP Books, 1998, Pages 120-121

Here is a pivotal point where the act is no longer just separation but the instruction that the earth shall put forth – it is a releasing, an allowing to produce – the giving of the power to produce from its own resources. This is a shift from the work of just the Creator. God gives it full permission to go and do what it needs to do. It is given the power – the *dynamis* of God - to fulfill its purpose.

**No one element is sustainable unto itself. All elements must be in place in order and in balance.**

Once having created the stage upon which humanity will stand, God then adds those elements that will sustain the populations of creation (humanity and animals). This careful layering of elements in logical order shows the interconnectivity of the whole of creation. No one element is sustainable unto itself. All elements must be in place in order and in balance. They function as a whole to further create an environment of mutual sustainability. This then further supports the idea of the ebb and flow of creation. It is a dynamic and not a static entity. It moves, springs forth to support the next, and when all is in place, it will become a cyclical process.

**Genesis 1:14-19** And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years,"<sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so.<sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights-- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night-- and the stars.<sup>17</sup> God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,<sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.<sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

Here is where the controversy could begin as far as the concept of the human time element. This is where human time begins – the place of where we can measure space and time. My opinion is that before this we were dealing in God's time, which is the incomprehensible concept of the eternal to humanity. Our finite minds cannot understand, grasp or function in an atmosphere that has no start or end. The story gives us intervals so that we can understand things as a process, not for God's limitation. Can God create within the space of our limited time reference? Without a doubt, otherwise God would not be God. But the question is why are we limiting Him to the finite? Again I call to the sequence of events. The act of creation occurs first, God declares it good and then "there was evening and there was morning".

The way of understanding the day is different from ours in that the day begins with the evening. The setting of the sun begins the day and does not conclude it as it does in ours. The sequence of the events dictates the order of events. If you are a literalist then you must conclude by reason of order that the action takes place outside of the boundaries of time. Then the act within itself is timeless – then placed with in time sequence.

The word signs here have significance. It is not used exclusively as a marker of time but when we look at how signs function in the Old Testament, God uses them to act as something that gives us knowledge and revelation about who God is. These signs can be used as a warning, as motivation to do something, or to authenticate that this is of God. It is not a mechanical function but a theological one,<sup>10</sup> so it is not limited to the ticking of a clock.

The story of creation is an orderly, harmonious assemblage of God's plan. God places into being the conditions necessary for marking existence measurable and understandable for placement of man. Time is marked and managed by the ebb and flow of creation itself like the changing of the seasons or the movement of the planets – not through the gears or electronics of a clock. Human time is best measured not by the dot on the face of a clock but by the stage upon which humanity stands. Humanity's time clock (biologic and cosmic) is built into the movement of the planets, the stars and the seasons. The movement of these heavenly bodies in regular flowing and measurable paths allow for us to remember and document events as they tie us into the larger picture of creation. This creates the things that make it possible to place the story in an order on a time line to give creation a measure for placement in existence. The time element is not exacting but flows. It overlaps. Here is the beginning of the ability to tell human time. Before this point it was strictly God's timing in God's measure – eternal. Our time, the finite, is measured in the passing of the finite items.

### **Seasons are not based on some mechanical means but on the practices of the people in relationship**

There is one more indication of what seasons mean. To the Hebrew its meaning goes beyond the concept of spring, summer, fall and winter. If you look through the first five books of the bible (the Pentateuch), seasons are festivals and religious feast days on a calendar tied to worship (liturgical calendar). Seasons are not based on some mechanical means but on the practices of the people in relationship.<sup>11</sup>

So these seasons are markers that God wishes us to measure life by, not just moments of human convenience.

**Genesis 1:20-23** And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

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<sup>10</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, and David W. Baker, (eds.) Dictionary of the Old Testament, Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP, 2003, page 159

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 159

Once all the elements of the stage were set, the creation of the players takes place. Just a side note the water element here has two meanings. To our modern inference the water element is the liquid element only. To the ancient reference the water element is those things that flow, thus air is as fluid as water. This would then be the reason for the birds of the air and the fish of the sea being a part of the same grouping. Also note that it is from these waters that the creation is separated. To the ancient way of understanding, those things in the water's depth cannot be seen. They are part of a chaos that is not known. So to separate them out makes them have the possibility to be known – not just a confusing mass that blends together. Even that which appears to be chaotic now has a purpose.

God's speaking caused these elements to be allowed to bring forth living creatures. Even the earth was given permission to be a part of the act of creation. God is in relationship with the earth. God gives it a purpose. God further separates the elements of creation one from the other.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Here is where the narrative takes a turn from God separating one thing from another. Here is where the main players are to take on their order, function and purpose. It is the beginning of relationships. It is a calling forth, being given abilities, order, function and purpose. It is being empowered to be and to do what they are designed to do.

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

Here something happens in the order of creation. Previously God created items that point to God but are not like God. Here God creates something that directly reflects aspects and attributes of God. It is something that is made in the image; meaning someone who closely resembles the creator but is not the creator. This creation is given a unique assignment of responsibility for the care of the rest of creation. This creation is given dominion which is the ability to control or the right to rule over something. This creation can have a sphere of influence over a particular area of concern. It is a land that is to be governed over.

Image is a word we must look at carefully.) The Hebrew word is *צלם* (*tselem*) meaning: *an image* and its usage is: form(1), image (5), images(6), likenesses(3), phantom(m)(1) as indicated in the *New American Standard Bible*. In the *King James*

*Version tselem {tseh'-lem}* has its meaning as : 1) image 1a) images (of *tumours*, mice, heathen gods) 1b) image, likeness (of resemblance) 1c) mere, empty, image, semblance.

The *Geneva Bible* uses this explanation of Genesis 1:26, God previously commanded the water and the earth to bring forth other parts of creation; however with man it is another way. God takes on the counsel of God's wisdom and virtue in the proposition of humanity's creation placing it in another category.

### **We are given the power and the authority to operate within God's creation, to shape and mold it so that it fits the ultimate purpose of God's design**

In the *New Revised Standard Bible* Ephesians 4:24 reads "and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." This understanding of the image of man will be important in further discussion of the creative purpose of humanity. It is important that we understand that humanity's assignment is to be a representative of God. What I mean by this is that we are decreed by God to act in the world as God's representative and act accordingly. We are given the power and the authority to operate within God's creation, to shape and mold it so that it fits the ultimate purpose of God's design.

It is reemphasized with the phrase "according to our likeness." Likeness is a representation having similarities. In this, the concept is clearly demonstrated that mankind, humanity, humankind is placed in creation as caretaker, servant to God to serve as caretaker of all earthly creation. God created the complete stage with a host of characters in an exact order. God then specifically created a main set of characters, us, to act as a governor assigned to taking care of all of created creatures. These main characters are acting as those who have been given the authority to do so. They are in relationship to the One that has given humanity the power and purpose to do it.

The word likeness in the Hebrew דְּמוּת *demuwth {dem-ooth'}* has the meaning of: n f 1) likeness, similitude adv 2) in the likeness of, like as. So we have an important factor being called to our attention through emphasis of using two words with similar meanings. These words together amplify one another.

The idea of image and likeness is very important to all of humanity. The very first thing we learn of God is that God is a creative God. From what we have seen previously is that creativity means that God gives order, function and purpose. God is indeed the creator and is creative. Therefore, as one who is created in the image and likeness of God you are to be creative. Creative's meaning here is not in the exact same way as God the Creator but creative as one who is representational or an imitator of the Creator.

**Genesis 1:27-28** So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the

earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Again here is the emphasis of humankind being made in the image of God by saying it twice. Not only was it written twice but the distinction of male and female is that one is not given superiority over the other. God blessed both entities equally, given both complete capability to have dominion over the occupants of the creative stage. This was the order of things.

We have a unique relationship with God and as described in the text of Genesis it isn't exactly clear what the image of God is. The Old Testament abhors any representation of God in any form. The phrase the image of God raises humans above the rest of creation and puts humanity alongside of God – not equal to but alongside. The term image (*saleh* in Hebrew) is explained by the use of similarity (*demut*) in verse 26. The two words when placed together mean according to a similar but not identical representation. This makes it different than all the other creation stories that are from the Near Eastern traditions of a divine being that formed humanity in a divine shape. We have to remember not to connect image exclusively to a spiritual or moral capacity of humanity. It is about the likeness and not a precise indication of what that nature is. The idea of likeness is that a human being ('*adam*') became God's representative on earth. We have the right to explore, subdue, and partake of the creation as the words in the text convey in "let them have dominion over". We, men and women, are to rule the world in God's name.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful

The word blessed has many divergent meanings. It can be used for expressing happiness or satisfaction, anger, holy, and loved by God. In helping with the concept of what this word means are the synonyms of blessed, being holy, welcome, sanctified, and approved. So when we say that God blessed them, not only was humanity set apart to for a purpose, humanity was sanctified (consecrated) and approved to serve as the representative image of God to give order, purpose, function and meaning to the earth and all of its inhabitants.<sup>13</sup>

Here is the Hebrew lexical definition of fruitful. פָּרָה *parah* {paw-raw'} that has the meaning: 1) to bear fruit, be fruitful, branch off 1a) (Qal) to bear fruit, be fruitful 1b) (Hiphil) 1b1) to cause to bear fruit 1b2) to make fruitful 1b3) to show fruitfulness, bear fruit

Fruitful in the English interpretation has multiple meanings of the ability to bear fruit in abundance, producing many offspring, causing or promoting fertility or productivity, highly productive or creative producing useful results or benefits. Here again is an aspect that is seldom discussed – the creative birthright through blessing. The

<sup>12</sup> LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush. (eds.), Old Testament Survey – The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1996, Pages 23-24

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com> May 14, 2014

synonyms are productive, fertile, rich, prolific, abundant, successful, profitable, rewarding, effective, and prosperous.

Where do you hear these words? They are all a part of the concepts and ideas that Jesus uses as part of the good news. This is what we are redeemed for.

Another key word here is subdue. Subdue is the act of bringing under control, to restrain, discipline and tame. It is left up to humanity to continue creation by having it abide by the borders that the Creator has been placed in. Humanity is given permission to be creative in its use. It also implies to use it to its potential. Notice it does not say dominate, lord over, beat into submission, abuse, or plunder but rather to act as an agent of the one who created it all. This to make sure that it stays within the confines of its existence and purpose for which it was designed and in doing so, making sure that all was functioning.

Here is where the creative engine has its beginnings; we are made in the image, given dominion and contained within the blessing. We are given the power and the authority to act upon creation producing rich, fertile, abundant, successful, profitable, rewarding, effective and prosperous results.

**Genesis 1:29-30** God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

God declares the task of ordering and placing things within the confines of existence done. It is not only good but very good. However it does not state that it was completed. It just means that this phase of it is over. The world was very good but not in fact or in context perfect. Perfect meaning completed. God places it in the hands of those – because they were made in the image and likeness of the Creator – who have been given permission to make it or bring it into its full potential. This so it can fulfill its destiny as it was created to do.

All was in balance. All was as it should be and placed within our hands. The scripture continues with this final proclamation.

**Genesis 2:1-3** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.



The heavens and earth were finished as in being brought to the place where they were given their purpose. However, notice the final phrase – because God rested from all the work that He had done in creation. This is an open ended statement. The craftsman was done with the work that he would do, but leaves it in the hands of those whom he is training to ready the work for its completion. We were given the world in correct, systematically ordered and complete form so that we – as representatives of the Divine Order - may continue the creative exploration and expansion to the glory and purpose of God.

This is the prelude/prolog to what will be explained next in scripture. It is catching you up to where the character development of the story takes place. To this point you only catch a glimpse of what God has done so that humanity can be placed in the narration. This is the story in front of the screen. Humanity is not created in a vacuum but carefully placed within a sustainable environment where humanity's interaction with and to the rest of creation is perfected – completed in the sense that it had been given its purpose and place for all to plainly see.

Here is where you find the purpose of creative and artistic expression. It is firmly rooted within two factors – the primary attribute we first learn of God is that God is the Creator. Secondly, we are made in image and likeness of God. Based upon these two irrefutable factors, the logical conclusion is that we are creative. These drives are the life breathed birth right of humanity.

But this is not the only concept that can come from reading the text and uncovering its meaning. As we have closely read in Genesis there are patterns that appear and must be discussed.

Besides the seven day sequence, there are other patterns to discover that will lead to substantive meaning. There are thirteen permissive commands which in some form use the words “let there be” (verse 3, verse 6, verse 9 – 2x, verse 11, verse 14, verse 15, verse 20 -2x, verse 24, verse 26 – 3x). These permissive commandments give to each section of the revelatory nature of this narrative, the ability, authority and power to perform its assigned purpose. God then establishes a boundary of operation in which these entities function.

Verse 26 does something different. It does not point the permissive command to creation but rather to God. “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness”. The indication is that the command is self-directed and it is a command that establishes the pattern for that creation. It is a cooperative effort and very relational. The implication is that humanity is to be made in the image (an imitation) of the God head that would perform its purpose and function as the likeness (representation/representative) of God. This is the establishment of what would become the Imago Dei that would play itself out throughout biblical passages until you reach the redemptive, regenerative, and reconciling acts of Jesus. The statement Jesus makes is that when you see him you are in fact seeing the Father. This is the reclamation of the image of God in whom all humanity was made and empowered in.

**The original design of humanity was to have the authority to act and be empowered by God to be fruitful, multiplying the image of God throughout creation,**

It is the reordering of the broken image of Adam to the full image of God. It is the reality of the parable of the prodigal son. The original design of humanity was to have the authority to act and be empowered by God to be fruitful, multiplying the image of God throughout creation. We are to bring creation into submission for God's purpose. We have the ability to rule - not in the same sense that God ultimately rules - but in the sense that humanity takes control and develops creation according to the purposes of God. God has given humanity the authority to act as God's ambassadors and carry the authority, order, purpose and function. Humanity is to be an imitator of God. God empowered. God blessed.

After this close reading of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3, we can begin to have an understanding that we, being made in the image and likeness of God, have been given authority and power to carry out the plans and purposes of God the Creator. This image was broken through the fall but redeemed through the preaching, teaching, demonstration of signs and wonders, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The final act of reclamation of the image of God in fullness was with the final act of Pentecost as the re-empowerment of the redeemed image of God in humanity. It is the re-introduction of the God breathed capacity of humanity to carry the image and likeness of God. Like the prodigal son parable - it is a process. All the items are in place - the carrier just needs to be cleaned up. This was the plan from the outset of creation to have a fully authoritative and empowered humanity. This redemption of the image of God is so that we can fulfill our destiny as seen in the life of Christ as testified especially in the texts of the evangelist John. (John 5:19, 8:38, 17:6-24)

**John 5:19** Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

**John 8:38** I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father."

**John 17:6-24** **6** "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. **7** Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; **8** for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. **9** I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. **10** All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. **11** And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. **12** While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one

destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. **13** But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. **14** I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. **15** I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. **16** They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19** And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. **20** "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, **21** that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22** The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, **23** I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. **24** Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

### **So... Who Are You?**

You are not your job, your circumstance, your condition, or your culture. These are things that do not define who you are. They are things that can help express who you are but they are not at the center of who you are. Your job, circumstance, condition and culture all change. You have the ability to affect them in a positive way by bringing the kingdom of God to them. You are an ambassador of the kingdom of God. You have been given full rights and privileges to act as one who represents the kingdom. You are the one who can give them their order, purpose and function as it relates to the order, purpose and function of the kingdom of God.

You are made in the image and likeness of God and therefore you are a child of God and creative. You have been given the mind of Christ. The Spirit of the Lord is upon you. You have been anointed and given the word of God and sent by God to proclaim the good news to the poor, release the captives, recover sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to comfort all who mourn and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. You will dream dreams and you will prophesy. You have the protection of the Father as you are one with the Father being made in the image and likeness of God. You have been set a part (sanctified) for the purposes of God. You have been placed in Jesus as Jesus has been placed in the Father. You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do all these things. This is who you were intended to be from before the beginning of the world.

### **Accept It, Embrace It, and Change the World!**

### SCRIPTURE FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Genesis 1:1 through 4:26 – *Imago Dei* (Image of God), *dynamis Theo* (Power of God), *Basileis Tou Theo* (Kingdom of God)
- Numbers 11:29 – Prophecy – Hearing the word of God
- Proverbs 29 Vision – Hearing the word of God and the law (the written word) – relational
- Isaiah 59:21- The Spirit of God Upon them and prophetic utterance for all generations
- Isaiah 61- The good news of deliverance, The Spirit of the Lord upon them
- Joel 2:28-30 – The Spirit of God, prophecy, dreams and visions
- Matthew 10 – Authority and healing, mission, persecution, division, fear of the Lord, reward
- Matthew 28 – The great commission
- John 1:29/Mark 1:7 – Proclamation of the coming of the Spirit
- Mark 1:24 – Even the demonic recognizes the authority of Jesus.
- Mark 1:38, Luke 4:43, Luke 13:32 – Jesus’ proclamation of his mission – the kingdom of God.
- Mark 10:45 – Service
- Matthew 9:35 – Teaching and announcing the good news of the Kingdom and healing (Repeated in Matthew 4:23)
- Matthew 10:7 /Luke 9:11 /Luke 10:9 – Announce the Kingdom of Heaven is near: heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.
- Matthew 12:28/Luke 11:20 – Demonstration of the Spirit upon the believer
- Matthew 28: 17-20 – Directive
- Mark 3:14-15 – He appointed twelve
- Mark 6:1- 6 – Limitation through rejection
- John 6:28-29 – God’s work requires belief in Jesus
- John 10:10 – The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”
- Acts 1:8 – Will receive the Holy Spirit and become a witness
- Acts 9:17 – Impartation, healing and the Holy Spirit
- Acts 10:36 – Preaching good news of peace, anointing from the Holy Spirit with power, doing good and healing for God was with him
- Acts 26:16 – Anointing to serve and testify
- James 1: 19 -27 Hearers and doers of the word
- 1 Peter 1:5 – Faith and power (*en dunamei*) until (*eis*) a salvation at the last time.
- 1 Peter 4:7-12 – The end being near one should use their spiritual gifts to serve
- 1 John 2:26-28 – As an antidote to false prophets, and an encouragement to use the gift of prophecy. This passage is strikingly parallel to the promise of the *Paraclete* to the apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13f).
- 1 John 3:8- The son of God’s purpose is to destroy the works of the devil
- Jude 18-21- Edification through praying in the Spirit = praying in response to the direct leading of the Spirit- a revelatory process

## PowerPoint Slide Material for “Who Are You?” Presentation

1. Who Are You?

2. Introduction:

Who Are You?

I am just a \*\*\*\*\*

3. Introduction:

People have a tendency to identify themselves with:

- Groups/organizations
- Occupation
- Physical Conditions
- Mental Conditions
- Ownership

4. Here is the problem:

What Would happen if anyone of these things were suddenly taken away?

Would you still be who you said you were?

5. You Are Not Your Job!

What would happen if tomorrow your job no longer existed?

6. You Are Not Your Circumstance!

Just like living in a garage, sitting in a chair with a steering wheel in your hand saying vroom, vroom, beep, beep, doesn't make you a car -

Your circumstance doesn't determine who you are!

7. You Are Not Your Condition!

Conditions is a description of how things are being lived out !

The conditions of how you live doesn't determine who you are!

8. Your Identity is Not:

- Something You Do
- What Society, Family, or Friends Says That It Is
- Your Race, Ethnicity
- Your Education

9. WHO AM I ???!!!

10. Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 2:4 is the complete blue print of what the whole of creation was supposed to be and who we are.

11. The problem is?

With the broken image you can't possibly know who you truly are.

The reason why the church looks the same as society is because the church teaches that we are broken – even when saved.

12. How can we carry out the commands of Jesus if we think of ourselves as broken?

13. How can we carry out the commands of Jesus if we think of ourselves as broken?

Matthew 10:7-8 As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment

14. How can we carry out the commands of Jesus if we think of ourselves as broken?

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

15. How can we carry out the commands of Jesus if we think of ourselves as broken?

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Isaiah 61: 1-2)

16. How can we carry out the commands of Jesus if we think of ourselves as broken?

Isaiah 61:1-2 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; (Luke 4:18-19)

17. How can we carry out the commands of Jesus if we think of ourselves as broken?

Luke 16:15 So he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.

18. Jesus came so that we may have life more abundantly.

In order to do that, you must be restored, redeemed, regenerated, and renewed to the original factory image that humanity was created in.

That image is contained in Genesis 1:1 through 2:3.

21. "Genesis 1:1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.'

22. People in the ancient Near East did not think of creation in terms of making things. To them being creative was bringing order to things. Time was not of concern but rather orderliness, purpose, function and condition. It is not so much what was created but for what reason.

23. One of the definitions for the word void is being pointless, being ineffective or useless. When formless, meaning shapeless and disorganized is placed in front of void, it emphasizes the condition.

24. God at the end of the sequence gives it borders to contain it, restrain it and define it. He gives it purpose for our benefit. The sequence starts with the object being identified, activity being done and then placed within its permanent border – the day.

25. Genesis 1:4-5 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

26. Genesis 1:6-8 6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. 8 God called the dome sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

27. These are the important first steps in creating the environment where things can be placed upon the canvas of existence.

28. The truth is in scripture and in the world – exactly in the whole of creation. Most importantly it is in our relationship with God and what God speaks to each one of us as being our purpose. One will not contradict the other because they are of God.

29. No one element is sustainable unto itself. All elements must be in placed in order and in balance.

30. No one element is sustainable unto itself. All elements must be in placed in order and in balance. The story of creation is an orderly, harmonious assemblage of God's plan. God places into being the conditions necessary for marking existence measurable and understandable for placement of man.

31. Seasons are not based on some mechanical means but on the practices of the people in relationship

32. Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

33. Previously God created items that point to God but are not like God. Here God creates something that directly reflects aspects and attributes of God. It is something that is made in the image; meaning someone who closely resembles the creator but is not the creator. This creation is given a unique assignment of responsibility for the care of the rest of creation.

34. Image is a word we must look at carefully.) The Hebrew word is *tselem*, (tselem) meaning: an image and its usage is: form(1), image (5), images(6), likenesses(3), phantom(m)(1) as indicated in the New American Standard Bible. In the King James Version *tselem* {tseh'-lem} has its meaning as : 1) image 1a) images (of tumours, mice, heathen gods) 1b) image, likeness (of resemblance) 1c) mere, empty, image, semblance.

35. The Geneva Bible uses this explanation of Genesis 1:26, God previously commanded the water and the earth to bring forth other parts of creation; however with man it is another way. God takes on the counsel of God's wisdom and virtue in the proposition of humanity's creation placing it in another category.

36. We are given the power and the authority to operate within God's creation, to shape and mold it so that it fits the ultimate purpose of God's design

37. Genesis 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. 2 And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

38. The original design of humanity was to have the authority to act and be empowered by God to be fruitful, and multiplying the image of God throughout creation.

39. We, being made in the image and likeness of God, have been given authority and power to carry out the plans and purposes of God the Creator. This image was broken through the fall but redeemed through the preaching, teaching, demonstration of signs and wonders, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The final act of reclamation of the image of God in fullness was with the final act of Pentecost as the re-empowerment of the redeemed image of God in humanity.

40. So... Who Are You?

41. You are made in the image and likeness of God and therefore you are a child of God and creative.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you. You have been anointed and given the word of God and sent by God to proclaim the good news to the poor, release the captives, recover sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to comfort all who mourn and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

42. You will dream dreams and you will prophesy. You have the protection of the Father as you are one with the Father being made in the image and likeness of God.



You have been set a part (sanctified) for the purposes of God. You have been placed in Jesus as Jesus has been placed in the Father. You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do all these things.

43. This is who you were intended to be from before the beginning of the world.

Accept It, Embrace It, and Change the World!

## APPENDIX D

### GENESIS 1:1 TO 2:3 7 DAYS CHART

Genesis 1: 1 – 2: 3			1 <sup>ST</sup> DAY
Verse	Groupings	Observation	
1:1	In the beginning when	Statement of time placement of the narrative	
	God created <sup>1</sup>	identity of God as creator, past tense – non specific	
	the heavens and the earth,	what was created	
1:2	the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep,	Condition of the earth during the process	
	while <b>a wind</b> from God <sup>1</sup> swept over the face of the waters.	God in active encounter with the earth	
1:3	Then <b>God said</b> , “ <b>Let there be light</b> ”	God Speaking – acting	
	and there was light.	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed	
1:4	And God saw that the light was <b>good</b>	Result	
	And God saw that the light was <b>good</b>	Observation and pronouncement of condition	
	and God <i>separated</i> the light from the darkness.	Active involvement in the creative act	
1:5	God <i>called</i> the light Day and the darkness he called Night	Naming of created entities	
	And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.	Completion of a Cycle	

Verse	Groupings	Observation
1:6	And <b>God said</b> ,	God Speaking – acting
	“ <b>Let there be</b> a dome	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed
	in the midst of the waters,	
	and <b>let</b> it <i>separate</i> the waters	
	from the waters.”	
1:7	So God made the dome	Active involvement in the creative act
	and <i>separated</i> the waters that	
	were under the dome	
	from the waters that were above the dome.	
	And it was so.	Process completion
1:8	God <i>called</i> the dome Sky.	Naming of created entities
	And there was evening	<b>Completion of a Cycle</b>
	and there was morning,	
	the second day.	

2 ND DAY

Verse	Groupings	Observation
<b>1:9</b>	And <b>God said</b> ,	God Speaking – acting
	“ <b>Let</b> the waters under the sky	Permissive
	be gathered together into one	commandment as to what
	place,	is allowed
	and <b>let</b> the dry land appear.”	Permissive
		commandment as to what
		is allowed
	And it was so	Process completion – declarative
<b>1:10</b>	God <i>called</i> the dry land Earth	Naming of created entities
	and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas	
	<i>And God saw that it was good.</i>	Observation and pronouncement of condition
<b>1:11</b>	Then <b>God said</b> ,	God Speaking – acting
	“ <b>Let</b> the earth put forth	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed
	vegetation:	
	plants yielding seed,	
	and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.”	
	And it was so.	Process completion - - declarative
<b>1:12</b>	The earth brought forth vegetation:	Result
	: plants yielding seed of every kind,	
	and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it.	
	<i>And God saw that it was good.</i>	Observation and pronouncement of condition
<b>1:13</b>	And there was evening	Completion of a Cycle
	and there was morning,	
	the third day.	

3 RD DAY

Verse	Groupings	Observation
<b>1:14</b>	<sup>14</sup> And <b>God said,</b>	God Speaking – acting
	“ <b>Let</b> there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night;	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed
	and <b>let</b> them be for signs	Giving the reason and purpose for their existence
	and for seasons	
	and for days	
	and years,	
<b>1:15</b>	<sup>15</sup> and <b>let</b> them be lights in the dome of the sky	Permissive commandment
	to give light upon the earth.”	Giving the reason and purpose for their existence
	<b>And it was so.</b>	Process completion – declarative
<b>1:16</b>	God made the two great lights	Result
	the greater light to rule the day	Purpose
	and the lesser light to rule the night --	
	and the stars.	
<b>1:17</b>	God set them in the dome of the sky	Resulting action
	to give light upon the earth,	Resulting purpose
<b>1:18</b>	to rule over the day	
	and over the night,	
	and to separate the light from the darkness.	
	<i>And God saw that it was good.</i>	Observation and pronouncement of condition
<b>1:19</b>	And there was evening	Completion of a Cycle
	and there was morning,	
	the fourth day.	

4<sup>TH</sup> DAY

Verse	Groupings	Observation
<b>1:20</b>	<sup>20</sup> And <b>God said</b> ,	God Speaking – acting
	“ <b>Let</b> the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures,	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed
	and <b>let</b> birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.”	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed
<b>1:21</b>	So God created the great sea monsters	Result
	and every living creature that moves,	
	of every kind,	
	with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind.	
	<i>And God saw that it was good.</i>	Observation and pronouncement of condition
<b>1:22</b>	God <b><i>blessed</i></b> them,	Conferring something – giving
	<b>saying,</b>	God Speaking – a direct commandment
	“Be fruitful	What the commandment entails
	and multiply	
	and fill the waters in the seas,	
	and let birds multiply on the earth.”	
<b>1:23</b>	And there was evening	Completion of a Cycle
	and there was morning,	
	the fifth day.	

5<sup>TH</sup> DAY

Verse	Groupings	Observation
<b>1:24</b>	<sup>24</sup> And <b>God said,</b>	God Speaking – acting
	“ <b>Let</b> the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind:	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed
	cattle	
	and creeping things	
	and wild animals of the earth of every kind.”	
	And it was so.	Process completion – declarative
<b>1:25</b>	God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind,	Result
	and the cattle of every kind ,	
	and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind.	
	<i>And God saw that it was good.</i>	Observation and pronouncement of condition
<b>1:26</b>	Then <b>God said,</b>	God Speaking – acting
	“ <b>Let</b> us make humankind <sup>1</sup> in <b><i>our image,</i></b>	Permissive commandment as to what and how
	according to <b><i>our likeness;</i></b>	Outcome of purpose
	and <b>let</b> them have dominion	Permissive commandment as to what is allowed and where
	over the fish of the sea,	
	and over the birds of the air,	
	and over the cattle,	
	and over all the wild animals of the earth,	
	and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”	
<b>1:27</b>	So God created humankind <sup>1</sup> in <b><i>his image,</i></b>	Result
	in the <b><i>image of God</i></b> he created them;	
	male	
	and female	
	he created them.	

6 <sup>th</sup> Day continued		
Verse	Groupings	Observation
1:28	God <i>blessed</i> them,	Conferring something – giving
	and <b>God said</b> to them,	God Speaking – a direct commandment to the created
	“Be fruitful and multiply,	First part of what the commandment entails
	and fill the earth	
	and <u>subdue</u> it ;	
	and have <u>dominion</u>	Second part of what the commandment entails
	over the fish of the sea	
	and over the birds of the air	
	and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”	
1:29	<sup>29</sup> <b>God said,</b>	God Speaking – a direct commandment to the created
	“See,	Observe all that has been given and the condition that it was given.
	I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth,	
	and every tree with seed in its fruit;	
	you shall have them for food.	Purpose
1:30	And to every beast of the earth,	Inclusive action
	and to every bird of the air,	
	and to everything that creeps on the earth,	
	everything that has the breath of life,	Purpose
	I have given every green plant for food.”	
	And it was so.	Process completion – declarative
1:31	God saw everything that he had made,	Observation and pronouncement of condition
	<i>and indeed,</i>	
	<i>it was very good.</i>	
	And there was evening	Completion of a Cycle
	and there was morning,	
	the sixth day.	



Verse	Groupings	Observation
2:1	Thus the heavens and the earth were finished,. And all their multitude	Announcement of the Completion of the creative process of the narrative
2:2	<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day	Time indication God completion – in past tense Resulting action
	from all the work that he had done.	Causation of action
2:3	<sup>3</sup> So God <b><i>blessed</i></b> the seventh day	Conferring something  Completion of a Phase

7<sup>TH</sup> DAY

## **APPENDIX E**

### **CONSENT FORMS**

#### **ORAL DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOL**

##### **Instructions:**

##### **(1) Informing your Participant:**

When an individual is approached to be interviewed, either with or without electronic recording, it is important that you explain to them very clearly who you are, what the project is about, why you are doing it, what risks it poses to them, who will benefit, and what will become of the materials. This makes for “informed consent,” meaning they truly understand what they are getting involved in. You can read the materials to them, and you may also give them the option of reading the description themselves.

##### **(2) The Agreement to Interview Form**

The Agreement to Interview form is a very good and appropriate way to insure that your participants know what they are getting into. After you have read the project description to them, and explained clearly what the project is about, why you are doing it, and what will become of the interviews and other materials.

You may then, if you feel it’s appropriate, ask them to sign the Agreement to Interview form, and give them a copy. Keep the other copy in a safe place.

Alternatively, you can obtain their consent “on tape,” in the actual interview.

##### **(3) Final Consent Form**

(a) Draft Review: Before obtaining final consent, it is absolutely essential that the participants be given the opportunity to look over any final product(s) that you produce from the interviews, and they should have the opportunity to request changes (which you should then make). Remember, this is their words you are using, and those words are their intellectual property. It is important that you respect their requests to have their words read as they want them to.

The final consent form is designed so that you can get their signature in advance, providing that you will make the changes that they request. They may also want a family member or other third party to edit their materials, and the form also allows for this.

(b) Final Consent: this form allows you to go ahead and publish their words in whatever form is appropriate to your project. Note that there are also places where they can choose to be identified. If they do not sign these, but request to remain anonymous, you must respect that and protect their identities from being released.

#### **Informed Consent:**

**Creativity and Identity**  
**Kevin McKinney**  
**68 Salem Manor Court**  
**Selinsgrove, PA 17870**  
**570-985-9742**  
**kevin\_a\_mck@hotmail.com**

**Project Description:** This project is to help develop a discipleship methodology that helps in establishing the true identity of every believer so that they can see themselves as able to fulfill the commissioning statement of Jesus.

#### **Procedure and Risks:**

We would like to record the interview, if you are willing, and use the tapes to write our materials. We will record the interview only with your written consent, and will ask that no personal identifiers be used during the interview, to ensure your anonymity. Please feel free to say as much or as little as you want. You can decide not to answer any question, or to stop the interview any time you want. The tapes and transcripts will become the property of project.

If you so choose, the recordings and recording-transcripts (or copy of notes taken) will be kept anonymous, without any reference to your identity, and your identity will be concealed in any reports written from the interviews.

There are no known risks associated with participation in the study.

#### **Benefits:**

It is hoped that the results of this study will benefit the community through providing greater insight into the culture and history of our area.

#### **Cost Compensation:**

Participation in this study will involve no costs or payments to you.

**Confidentiality:**

All information collected during the study period will be kept strictly confidential until such time as you sign a release waiver. No publications or reports from this project will include identifying information on any participant without your signed permission, and after your review of the materials. If you agree to join this study, please sign your name on the following page.

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS****Creativity and Identity**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to be interviewed for the creativity and identity which is being produced by Kevin McKinney of Imago Ministries.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one or more electronically recorded interviews for this project. I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous, and that the results of this study may be published in an academic journal or book.

I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewee

*If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions or have comments or complaints about your treatment in this study, contact:*

[your or your institution's contact information here]

Cc: signed copy to interview.

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